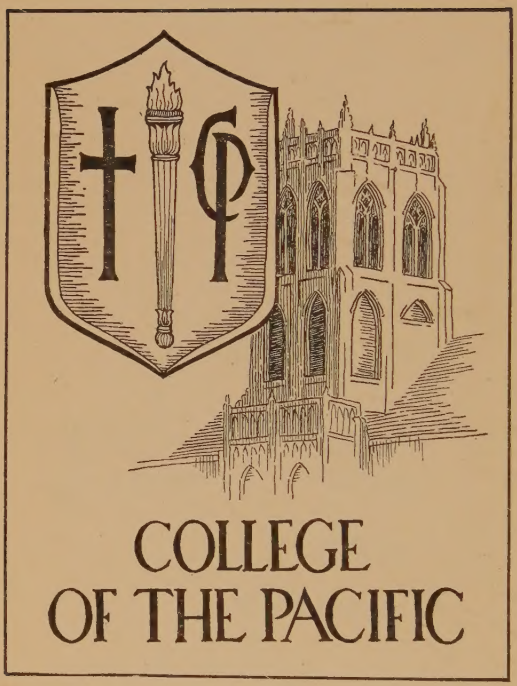
COLLEGE
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JOHN WALLACE WILSON
JOWAWI

NELSON'S LADY HAMILTON

JOHN WALLACE WILSON

LORD NELSON

JOHN HOPPNER

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

NELSON'S LADY HAMILTON

BY

E. HALLAM MOORHOUSE

WITH FIFTY-ONE PORTRAITS

LONDON
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"Gone are the Sirens from their sunny shore,
The Muses afterwards were heard no more,
But of the Graces there remains but one—
Gods name her Emma, mortals, Hamilton."

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

FOREWORD

NOTHING can so bring Emma Hamilton before the reader as her own impulsive, exclamatory letters, and the various tributes to her charm and ability which abound in the Memoirs and Journals of the period. Therefore these have been used freely. For permission to reprint the two letters from Horatia Nelson Ward to Sir Harris Nicolas, which are given in Chapters XIII. and XV., and which have only recently come to light, I am indebted to Mr. E. S. P. Haynes, the great-grandson of Sir Harris Nicolas. No one can write upon Lady Hamilton without expressing gratitude to Mr. Walter Sichel for that Life of her, which is a perfect treasure-house of knowledge and research. Among other books to which I am specially indebted are Mr. H. C. Gutteridge's invaluable volume on "Nelson and the Neapolitan Jacobins" (published by the

Navy Records Society); Professor Knox Laughton's "Nelson Memorial;" Captain Mahan's "Life of Nelson;" Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson's "Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson;" Mr. David Hannay's edition of Southey's "Nelson;" the "Nelson Letters," published in 1814; and, finally, the seven volumes of Sir Harris Nicolas's indispensable collection of Nelson's "Letters and Despatches." Thanks also are due to Mr. J. T. Herbert Baily, the editor of *The Connoisseur*, for his advice and assistance in regard to illustrations.

E. H. M.

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NELSON'S
LADY HAMILTON

CHAPTER I

A DAUGHTER OF THE PEOPLE

BY one of the ironies of history, a girl born of obscure parents, having no fortune save her face—and that fair face bringing her, for many years, no dower but disgrace and trouble—yet so triumphed over early misfortunes, and so won her place in the heart of the greatest hero of her time and country, that not all the efforts of the moralists can disentangle her name from that of Nelson.

Nelson himself, could his spirit speak, would forbid any such effort with all the vehemence of which he was capable. He made his choice—with distress and trouble of mind—but once made, he abode by it to his last breath. He defied the world and all that might be said or thought. His chivalrous spirit was utterly incapable of the miserable, if time-honoured, excuse, "The woman tempted me." Both Nelson and

Emma Hamilton must be accepted as they are: to calumniate and blacken her character is but to reflect on the hero's glory—which he threw like a mantle round all her faults and frailties.

Emma Hamilton is assured of a double remembrance, not only because she was loved by Nelson, but because she was painted by Romney. Through the medium of his pictures, as of her own letters, it will be seen that her personality is one of the most vivid that ever graced the stage of fame. The lovely lines of her face and form are perpetuated on so many canvases that she still seems to be dancing and smiling and meditating through the "Attitudes" that were the delight of all who beheld them during her lifetime. It is impossible to look at her many portraits and believe her the mere "adventuress" she has been so often called. There is no hard and scheming worldliness in that face, the worst fault is that it is a little soft and sensuous; but it is also gay, tender, appealing, and always has a look of innocent radiance, a fleeting wild-wood air, a touch of the eternal child—which she never entirely outgrew, in spite of her manifold and mixed experiences.

Emma's expressive face is typical of her character. Its very mobility was the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual weakness. She had not a trace of real badness in her, only a fatal adaptability, a perfectly

chameleon capacity for taking the colour of her surroundings. It was not design or worldly advantage that led her astray, but her impulsive heart —a heart as warm and kind as ever lived, but without any moral strength to guide and keep it in the paths of virtue. She was like a child, following a butterfly into quagmires or reaching for a water-lily on the edge of a deep pool—if she overbalanced and fell in, surely Nature, who made the butterfly and the water-lily so pretty and pleasing, was to be blamed far more than the ignorant and eager child. At any rate, Nature so made Emma that she could not resist the temptation of putting out her hand to the things that pleased her—while to an easy disposition, a really generous heart, and a considerable mental capacity, was added an enchanting beauty.

This beauty, and the charm which throughout her life was quite as potent a spell, sprang from a rough and homely soil, with little to explain or forecast it. Her parents were humble peasant people, her father being a blacksmith of Nesse, in Cheshire, and both of them being unable to put anything but the illiterate "mark" to their names in the marriage register. Little is known of the father, Henry Lyon, but the mother, Mary Kidd, must have been a somewhat remarkable woman, for she accompanied her daughter all through the varied and dazzling episodes of her career; and when that daughter was the wife

of the British Ambassador at Naples, she met royalties and great ladies, and by her sound sense and unassuming simplicity won both the respect and affection of men like Sir William Hamilton and Nelson. In the year after the Battle of the Nile, Emma Hamilton described in one of her letters the place taken by her mother—

"You can't think how she is loved and respected by all. She has adopted a mode of living that is charming. She has good apartments in our house, always lives with us, dines, etc., etc. Only when she does not like it (for example, at great dinners) she herself refuses, and has always a friend to dine with her; and the Signora Madre dell' Ambasciatrice is known all over Palermo, the same as she was at Naples. The Queen [of Naples] has been very kind to her in my absence, and went to see her, and told her she ought to be proud of her glorious and energick daughter, that has done so much in these last suffering months."

But those glittering days were yet hidden in the future, and little dreamed of by Mrs. Lyon at the time of her marriage. When she signed the register she could make nothing save her "mark," as has been said; but later she taught herself to write and read, and attained a moderate degree of education, which, in her place and circumstances, betokened a certain energy and force of character.

Her daughter, Emily Lyon, was born in 1765, on the 26th of April, and as her husband died in the year of the child's birth, Mrs. Lyon returned with her baby to her old home at Hawarden, in Flintshire. There in the thatched cottage of her grandmother, old Mrs. Kidd, the little Emily Lyon—who was later to change her name to Hart, and finally to Emma Hamilton—spent her early years. They were years of poverty and rough living, but the child had the two things essential to happiness and health: kind faces round her and the unlimited freedom of a hardy, wild little country girl. The fields were her playground, the birds and beasts her friends, the buffeting wind her wholesome nurse. These early years were the only time of her chequered life when it can be truly said of her that, in her fairness and her innocence, she embodied the Wordsworthian ideal of the child who "grew in sun and shower." But in spite of errors and grievous mistakes, so long as youth remained to her, she was—

> "A dancing shape, an image gay,
> To haunt, to startle, and waylay."

Her actual education—apart from that she unconsciously got out-of-doors—was of the scantiest. She was untrammelled and unfettered, till, at the age of thirteen, she entered the service of a Hawarden resident. It is believed that

her mistress made some kind attempt to teach her how to write and spell decently; but if this is true, the lady's efforts were not markedly successful, for even when the girl had become Lady Hamilton and an accomplished woman speaking several languages, she never moved securely among the complications of her native tongue.

An interesting fact in connection with this first situation of Emily Lyon's is that the daughter of the house was so taken with the already developing beauty of the young nursemaid that she sketched her. The picture, which still exists, is somewhat wooden and amateurish, but the features and fall of the hair are recognizable as those of the girl who so charmed and inspired Romney, while the little sketch is particularly interesting as showing how quickly she must have grown from childishness to the early blossoming of her beauty.

When Emily Lyon was about fifteen years old, she left the country and went up to London, where she entered upon a series of vicissitudes, and early came to grief. She began well enough in the service of a worthy surgeon, Dr. Budd, and this is the only fact that is quite authentically established about her life at this time. It is a somewhat curious circumstance that one of her fellow-servants in this situation was the charming and clever Jane Powell, who later became a

LADY HAMILTON AS A CHILD

GEORGE ROMNEY

talented actress, and was playing nightly at Drury Lane when Emma returned to London, many years afterwards, with Sir William Hamilton on the eve of her marriage. The two girls, who began their careers thus humbly side by side, retained an affectionate feeling for each other, and met at Southend so late as 1803.

After leaving her first London situation, Emily Lyon is said to have served in a shop, then as companion to a "lady of quality" of somewhat doubtful reputation; and it is constantly stated, though never definitely proved, that a notorious quack doctor of the day, named Graham, engaged her to pose as Hygeia in his meretricious "Temple of Health."

But it is certain that during this unsettled and uncertain period of her life she was very poor, very unwise, unprotected, and dangerously lovely. Even in her humble guise of the Beggar-maid she drew all eyes after her. The Prince Regent —whose memory, of course, was not the most reliable—used to declare that he recollected seeing her selling fruit in the streets, with wooden pattens on her feet. There is a picture of her as a fruit-seller, probably painted by Opie. As she passed up and down, people used to stand still and stare after the poor pretty creature. Unfortunately for the Beggar-maid, it was no King Cophetua who made his appearance, but one of the sailors of tradition who lightly love and sail

away. The naval officer whose conduct was so unworthy of a noble body of men—of whom the heroic and steadfast Collingwood may justly be regarded as far more typical—was Captain John Willet-Payne, afterwards a member of Parliament and treasurer of Greenwich Hospital.

It was Emma's warm heart, and possibly, also, the first promptings of that love of influence which was so marked in her later on, that brought her in contact with the man who betrayed her inexperience. It is an odd coincidence that the girl who later on was to be called the "Patroness of the Navy" by grim old John Jervis himself, and who was always the friend of Nelson's seamen, should have got into her first trouble through a naval officer, and in the effort to help a sailor. The press-gang had seized a young man whom she had known during her Flintshire days, and carried him off to a ship lying in the Thames. Sympathy for distress was always marked in Emma, and this news and the thought of his poor wife's anguish of mind, so worked upon her that she was moved to an impulsive action. She went to see Captain Willet-Payne, and pleaded with tears and all her native eloquence and feeling for the release of the "pressed" man. The susceptible sailor could not resist her charm and her entreaties, but neither could he let her pass out of his life as easily as she had come into it. Thus Emma's

generous impulse, coupled with her ignorance and easy temper, was the cause of her undoing.

It was her first step down "the primrose path of dalliance," and by no means the last. The sailor left her after a few months, and went away to sea, and the unhappy girl was cast out upon the world, friendless and scorned. That she had strivings of heart, and struggled to maintain her foothold on the slippery ground she stood upon, is shown by a pathetic and sincere little passage in a letter she wrote to Romney many years later, when she had just become Lady Hamilton. "You have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days," she reminds him, "you have known me in my poverty and prosperity, and I had no occasion to have lived for years in poverty and distress, if I had not felt something of virtue in my mind. Oh, my dear friend, for a time I own through distress my virtue was vanquished, but my sense of virtue was not overcome."

Young as she was, she early learned that a girl so beautiful as herself had "no occasion" to live in poverty and distress; so that in spite of the struggles she may have made after an honest living, she was again soon placed in easy, if insecure, circumstances. Exactly how and when she came across the next man who took her up does not greatly matter. Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, the sporting young squire, who installed her as the temporary mistress of his town

house and of Up Park, in Sussex, does not play a large or important part in Emma's career. While at Up Park, from the high Sussex Downs, she could see in the far distance Portsmouth, then, as now, the centre of naval activity—Portsmouth which was to be so much in her thoughts in later years.

During the time she lived with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh she was undoubtedly very giddy and reckless—probably because she was really unhappy and wretched at the thought of her position with a man who had not roused any real affection in her. The rowdy young men, who formed her only circle at this period, did not tend to encourage the finer accomplishments in a woman ; but she learned to sit a horse with grace and daring ; she hunted, and she spent Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's money with such freedom that he became sick of her, and in a singularly heartless manner turned her adrift a few months before she expected to become a mother.

It may seem strange to say that the man who was the father of her first child played no large part in Emma's life ; but such was the fact, and Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh had little influence upon her career and character. She passed through the experience of motherhood with very little change in her irresponsible outlook. Even the child, to which she was fondly attached in its

early years, and faithfully looked after, was no vital influence, but merely a pathetic, dim figure in the background of its mother's later brilliant fortunes. The little girl, who was named Emma, grew up to womanhood, was well educated and cared for, but—except for a short time when a small child—by others than her mother. She did not even know with certainty that Lady Hamilton was her mother, though it seems she must have had strong suspicions, as is shown by the only letter of hers extant, written by this unacknowledged daughter to Lady Hamilton in 1810.

"It might have been happy for me to have forgotten the past," she says, "and to have begun a new life with new ideas; but for my misfortune, my memory traces back circumstances which have taught me too much, yet not quite all I could have wished to have known. With you that resides, and ample reasons, no doubt, you have for not imparting them to me. Had you felt yourself at liberty so to have done, I might have become reconciled to my former situation, and have been relieved from the painful employment I now pursue. It was necessary as I then stood, for I had nothing to support me but the affection I bore you. On the other hand, doubts and fears by turns oppressed me, and I determined to rely on my own efforts, rather than submit to abject dependence, without a permanent

name or acknowledged parents. That I should have taken such a step shows, at least, that I have a mind misfortune has not subdued. That I should persevere in it is what I owe to myself and to you, for it shall never be said that I avail myself of your partiality, or my own inclination, unless I learn my claim on you is greater than you have hitherto acknowledged. But the time may come when the same reasons may cease to operate, and then, with a heart filled with tenderness and affection, will I show you both my duty and attachment."

There is a tone of sincerity and self-reliance in that letter which wins respect, but there is no record that the sad, inquiring voice was ever answered.

CHAPTER II

GREVILLE'S TRAINING

THE really important thing that happened to Emily Hart (as she now called herself) while at Up Park under the dubious protection of Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh was that there, in all probability, she first met the Honourable Charles Greville—the man who was to influence her more vitally than any other save Nelson.

Greville was the second son of the Earl of Warwick, a collector of rare and beautiful things, and the holder of a post at the Board of Admiralty. He was comparatively poor for a man of his position—so poor in his own eyes that marriage with an heiress was an absolute necessity if he was to take and maintain that place in the world to which his talents entitled him and his ambition pointed. When he first came across Emma, he was a year or two over thirty—young, good looking, and extremely well connected. Romney painted his portrait, and the face is distinctly attractive—large eyes, well set in the head, with an eager, searching look about

them, a long, well-shaped nose, a somewhat feminine chin, but the effect of the whole refined and distinguished, a man who might well appeal to a much more cultivated and critical girl than Emily Hart.

It is evident, from the tone of her first letters to him, that Greville must have taken some special notice of the wild and charming girl at Up Park, if that was where he first met her. When she was sent from Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh in disgrace, with the terror of coming motherhood hanging over her head, Greville must have indicated to her that she might write to him in certain circumstances. But at first Emily Hart clung to the hope—poor and shameful hope though it was—that the Sussex baronet would take her back. From Hawarden—for she had returned to her grandmother's thatched cottage in her trouble—she wrote repeatedly to Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, and it was not till she had written him seven letters without receiving a word in answer or even a contemptuous guinea to lessen her pressing poverty, that Emily Hart gave up hope of being restored to favour.

She was in a very desperate situation; she had no money to support herself, let alone the coming child, and her kind old grandmother could not afford to keep her indefinitely. In her shame and distress she turned to the one man among her Up Park acquaintances, who had been something

LADY HAMILTON AS "BACCHANTE"

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

more than a rake or a rowdy young sportsman, to the man who had given her a glimpse of something better—for it was characteristic of Emma, in spite of her numerous stumblings and mistakes, that she was always attracted to what she regarded as noble and exalted; it was her nature to idolize and glorify those she loved. The Honourable Charles Greville was the best type of man she had yet known. That he was innately selfish and cold-hearted she was not to learn for several years to come.

So she wrote to him, telling him of her sad situation, and he appears to have replied pretty promptly. The pitiful eagerness with which she seized upon the first kind hand held out to her is revealed by the following almost panic-stricken letter, still breathing in every one of its ill-spelled sentences the anguish of her mind:—

"My dear Grevell,—Yesterday did I receve your kind letter. It put me in some spirits, for, believe me, I am allmost distracktid. I have never hard from Sir H., and he is not at Lechster now, I am sure. I have wrote 7 letters, and no anser. What shall I dow? Good God, what shall I dow? I can't come to town for want of money. I have not a farthing to bless my self with, and I think my frends looks cooly on me. I think so. O, G., what shall I dow? What shall I dow? O how your letter affected me

when you wished me happiness. O, G., that I was in your posesion or in Sir H. what a happy girl would I have been! Girl indeed! What else am I but a girl in distress—in reall distress? For God's sake, G., write the minet you get this, and only tell me what I am to dow. Direct some whay. I am allmos mad. O for God's sake tell me what is to become on me. O dear Grevell, write to me. Write to me. G., adue, and believe yours for ever. EMLY HART

"Don't tel my mother what distres I am in, and dow afford me some comfort."

Greville would have been indeed hard-hearted if he could have read this "distracktid" epistle without being moved, though the way it was written, the servant-girl spelling and hand-writing, must have seriously offended his fastidious taste. But such beauty as the erring Emma's covers a multitude of sins. Greville knew her to be tractable and warm-hearted, as well as beautiful. She seemed to him a promising subject for his training, so he wrote her the following curious medley of reproof, comforting assurances, and worldly wisdom :—

"MY DEAR EMILY,—I do not make apologies for Sir H.'s behaviour to you, and altho' I advised you to deserve his esteem by your good conduct,

I own I never expected better from him. It was your duty to deserve good treatment, and it gave me great concern to see you imprudent the first time you came to G., from the country, as the same conduct was repeated when you was last in town, I began to despair of your happiness. To prove to you that I do not accuse you falsely, I only mention five guineas and half a guinea for a coach. But, my dear Emily, as you seem quite miserable now, I do not mean to give you uneasiness, but comfort, and tell you that I will forget your faults and bad conduct to Sir H. and myself, and will not repent my good humour if I find that you have learned by experience to value yourself, and endeavour to preserve your friends by good conduct and affection. I will now answer your last letter. You tell me you think your friends look cooly on you, it is therefore time to leave them: but it is necessary for you to decide some points *before* you come to town. You are sensible that for the next three months your situation will not admit of a giddy life, if you wished it. . . . After you have told me that Sir H. gave you barely money to get to your friends, and has never answered one letter since, and neither provides for you nor takes any notice of you, it might appear laughing at you to advise you to make Sir H. more kind and attentive. I do not think a great deal of time should be lost, for I have never seen a

woman clever enough to keep a man who was tired of her. But it is a great deal more for me to *advise you* never to see him again, and to write only to inform him of your determination. You must, however, do either the one or the other. . . . You may easily see, my dearest Emily, why it is absolutely necessary for this point to be completely settled *before I can* move one step. If you love Sir H. you should not give him up. . . . My advice then is to take a steady resolution. . . . I shall then be free to dry up the tears of my lovely Emily and to give her comfort. If you do not forfeit my esteem perhaps my Emily may be happy. You know I have been so by avoiding the vexation which frequently arises from ingratitude and caprice. Nothing but your letter and your distress could incline me to alter my system, but remember I never will give up my place, or continue my connexion one moment after my confidence is betray'd. . . . By degrees I would get you a new set of acquaintances, and by keeping your own secret, and no one about you having it in their power to betray you, I may expect to see you respected and admired. Thus far as relates to yourself. As to the child . . . its mother shall obtain it kindness from me, and it shall never want. I enclose you some money; do not throw it away. You may send some presents when you arrive in town, but do not be on the road without some money *to spare* in case

you should be fatigued and wish to take your time. . . . God bless you, my dearest lovely girl; take your determination and let me hear from you once more. Adieu, my dear Emily."

This letter is fully as characteristic of Greville as the preceding impetuous outburst is of Emma. In it may be seen his temperament and outlook nicely sketched by his own hand. His standard of happiness is "avoiding vexation"—and avoiding also, it may be said, anything that jarred on his taste or injured his material prospects. His willingness to alter his "system" and admit this impulsive girl, of whom he was by no means certain, into his carefully ordered existence, is explained by two things: first, her classical beauty and charm of colouring, which pleased his critical eye at every point; and, second, a marked strain of the pedant in himself, which made attractive the thought of having this delicious young thing to mould according to his own ideas. "If you do not forfeit my esteem," as this admirable mentor told her, "perhaps my Emily may be happy."

But it is easy to wax over-sarcastic towards Greville. He has been somewhat severely treated by several of the beauty's later champions, whose chivalry has carried them to the point of seeing him almost as an unnatural monster. He was really the saving of Emily Hart at a time

when she was hovering on the verge of a very dark abyss, and though his motives do not stand close inspection, it is probable that he really pitied and liked the girl. It is obvious that his proposals to her are entirely lacking in any moral feeling; but it must be remembered that he belonged to a worldly and cynical age as regards women, also he knew very well that Emily Hart was not an innocent untempted girl, but one whose "reall distres" and lack of protection was in danger of pushing her down past the chance of recovery. Indeed, it might have been expected that a girl who had already tripped and fallen several times would have finally gone under and been no more seen. But Emma had a really marvellous power of recovery and a sort of ineradicable innocence—or, if that word is barely applicable, a kind of freshness like that of running water, for ever moving eagerly forward and for ever obliterating the traces of the past. She had something of Nature's own quality, turning one season's soilure and despair to "the music and the bloom and all the mighty ravishment of spring." Her terrified question, "Good God, what shall I dow?" was not so much a voice from the depths, as the cry of a child in the dark—a child who is ready to smile again the instant the light returns, though the tears are yet wet on her lashes.

Greville's patronizing, kindly, immoral letter

was the light in the night of her distress. She came up to London from Flintshire as he advised her, and early in the spring of 1782 Greville had settled her and himself in a quiet little house in Edgware Row, with Emma's mother, now calling herself Mrs. Cadogan, to look after them generally. Mrs. Cadogan was an excellent woman, in spite of the complacent way in which she joined her daughter's different establishments when she was living first with Mr. Greville and afterwards with his uncle, as the wife of neither. She was a first-rate housekeeper and cook; Greville, as usual, knew what he was about when he told "his Emily" that "I would not be troubled with your connexions (excepting your mother) for the universe."

Edgware Row calls up an unattractive vision at the present day, but one hundred and twenty-five years ago it was quite a pretty country neighbourhood, close to Paddington Green—a region of "fresh woods and pastures new" to Emma, who spent some of the happiest, simplest, and most care-free years of her life there. The house was small and unassuming. Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson describes its interior minutely :—

"To visit this house, at any time of its tenancy by Mr. Greville, was to see he was a connoisseur. Together with fine examples of the Dutch school, the collector's choicest treasures comprised a few works by the best English

painters. In the drawing-room, there was a portrait of Emily Bertie, in the character of Thais, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds for Mr. Greville, and re-touched in certain points by the famous artist before it left the easel, to put it altogether in harmony with the young connoisseur's conceptions of the beautiful and true. In this salon might also be seen folios of rare engravings and unsurpassably fine mezzotints, bits of sculpture in marble and bronze, the cabinet of antique coins which Mr. Greville had brought together with infinite trouble and pleasure, and the fine collection of mineralogical specimens, which showed that the gentleman, who was very much of a connoisseur, was also something of a *savant*."

But without doubt the "choicest treasure" of Mr. Greville's collection was neither the Sir Joshua nor the minerals, but Emma herself. At this time she was close upon eighteen years old, and her beauty was blossoming towards its most exquisite period—a beauty radiant and fresh as the lilies of the field, the kind of beauty that "so draws the heart out of itself as to seem like magic," in the words of Richard Jefferies. She had that rare loveliness which is at once classic in outline yet sensitively mobile and changing in expression. No wonder Sir William Hamilton said of her that she was "finer than anything in antique art." Her gift for dramatising emotion in her famous "Attitudes" will be referred to

later; but it is sufficiently proved by the extraordinary variety and expressiveness of her poses in Romney's pictures: she personifies all the moods, and not as is done in so many conventional paintings, where an "Allegro" can hardly be distinguished from a "Penseroso," but with real feeling and exquisite adaptability. Hayley, who knew Emma well, says in his "Life of Romney," "The talents which nature bestowed on the fair Emma led her to delight in the two kindred arts of music and painting; in the first she acquired great practical ability; for the second she had exquisite taste, and such expressive powers as could furnish to an historical painter an *inspiring* model for the various characters, either delicate or sublime. . . . Her features, like the language of Shakespeare, could exhibit all the gradations of every passion with a most fascinating truth and felicity of expression. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her eloquent features."

Her colouring was of the pure and perfect kind that goes with warm, auburn hair, and this same hair was almost the greatest of her many beauties, growing in delicious lines from the broad, low forehead, and flowing almost to her heels—the hair of a true "Bacchante." Her eyes were grey—the "colour of genius," as it has been called, and in her own way Emma certainly was

a genius; but her eyes must have been the kind of grey that was capable of deepening and brightening, for they have been described as both violet and blue. Some critics considered her "beautiful and uncommon mouth" the most exquisite of her features. Take her all in all, and it will be admitted that the old Bishop of Derry was right, if not particularly reverent, when he said that the Creator was in a "glorious mood" when He made Emma.

It was this radiant creature that Greville established in the retirement of Paddington Green. Pettigrew speaks of the "splendid misery" of her life at this time, but the words are singularly ill-chosen. Her life was neither splendid nor miserable, but probably as complete an example of simple domestic happiness, in spite of the lack of the proper domestic tie, as could be found in the London of that day. Only good management kept the household running, as Greville insisted it must be run, on about a hundred a year, while Emma's own allowance for dress, charity, and amusements, was some £30 yearly. She had two maid-servants, whose wages were £8 and £9 a year—wages, it must be remembered, were much lower then than now. "Splendid misery" hardly fits this modest establishment and this strictly limited income. Some of the household account-books in Emma's handwriting remain, and the sums

AS A "BACCHANTE"

GEORGE ROMNEY

spent are amusingly small: apples, 2½*d.*; mangle, 5*d.*; cotton and needles, 9*d.*; coach, 1*s.*; poor man, ½*d.*

After living with her for three years, Greville was able to say of the girl whose wildness and extravagance had been too much for Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, "She does not wish for much society, but to retain two or three creditable acquaintances in the neighbourhood she has avoided every appearance of giddiness, and prides herself on the neatness of her person and the good order of her house; these are habits both comfortable and convenient to me. She has vanity and likes admiration; but she connects it so much with her desire of appearing prudent, that she is more pleas'd with accidental admiration than that of crowds which now distress her. In short, this habit, of three or four years' acquiring, is not a caprice, but is easily to be continued." And a little later he says, "She never has wished for an improper acquaintance. She has dropt every one she thought I could except against, and those of her own choice have been in a line of prudence and plainness, which, tho' I might have wished for, I could not have proposed to confine her." John Romney also said of her that "Her only resources were reading and music at home, and sitting for pictures."

Here was a discreet and transformed Emma! But the change, though genuine so far as it went,

was more on the surface than fundamental. It was not that her nature—always expressive and struggling for expression—was altered, but that she had become much more accomplished and —imitative and susceptible as she was—had insensibly acquired a more refined restraint of manner from living with Greville, who all his life, put manners before morals and repressed unbecoming emotion. Greville would not have influenced Emma so strongly if it had not been that she was very deeply and truly devoted to him. In her grateful eyes he was a model of all the virtues, and though there were times when her impulsive temper chafed at the restraints of Greville's "system," times when there were little outbursts, quickly repented, she yet spent her days in trying to please him and follow his wishes.

When separated from him temporarily once, she wrote—

"Oh! Greville, when I think on your goodness, your tender kindness, my heart is so full of gratitude that I want words to express it. But I have one happiness in vew, which I am determined to practice, and that is eveness of temper and steadness of mind. For endead I have thought so much of your amiable goodness when you have been tried to the utmost, that I will, endead I will manege myself, and try to be like Greville. Endead I can never be like

him. But I will do all I can towards it, and I am sure you will not desire more. I think if the time would come over again, I would be differant. But it does not matter. There is nothing like bying expearance. I may be happyer for it hereafter, and I will think of the time coming and not of the past, except to make comparrasons, to shew you what alterations there is for the best. . . . I will try, I will do my utmost; and I can only regrett that fortune will not put it in my power to make a return for all the kindness and goodness you have showed me."

One little episode belonging to this time of her life with Greville shows what a natural and incurably impulsive creature she remained, in spite of his training and her own eager efforts after a demeanour fitted to his ideas. Greville one evening took the young beauty with him to Ranelagh Gardens, and the lights and the people, coupled with the excitement of being with her "dear Greville" (who was chary of taking her often to places of public amusement), were all supremely delightful to the volatile Emma. There was an open-air concert going on; she listened enchanted to the singing, and when it ceased, to the amazement of the people and the absolute horror of Greville, she suddenly broke into song herself—with all the joyous unconsciousness of an early morning lark pouring

out her "full heart in profuse strains of unpremeditated art." She had a fine clear voice which had been under training for some time, and, like a very child, she stood up among the fashionable crowd at Ranelagh and sang the latest and the prettiest of her songs. She was applauded to the echo, but the only face there that mattered to her wore a look of severe displeasure. Greville hurried her out of the gardens and took her home, telling her that she had filled him with shame. Emma's spirits were easily dashed by those she loved, and she fled in tears to her room. She took off the finery which had given her such pleasure an hour or two ago and put on "a plain cottage dress." Then she went down to Greville and told him sadly that, as he was ashamed of her, he had better dismiss her, and she would go away as poor and as miserable as she came to him. Emma could play Beggar-maid or Ambassadress with equal charm.

She was very conscious of the defects of her own impulsive temper, and did what she could to curb it. She set great store by a didactic poem of Hayley's called "The Triumphs of Temper," and regarded its heroine, Serena, as an example of all that she herself vainly strove after. At this period of her life it might truly be said of her, as of Serena, that—

> "Free from ambitious pride and envious care,
> To love and to be loved was all her prayer."

It was while living in Edgware Row with Greville that Emma and Romney became friends, and that she sat to him for the innumerable pictures and studies which have been such a joy to lovers of beauty ever since—for in her portraits she combines the double charm of art and nature. During the four years, from 1782 to 1786, Romney records nearly three hundred sittings given him by Emma—or "Mrs. Hart," as he called her. In his own words she was his "divine lady" and his "inspirer," and she certainly deserved these expressions—he found the purest joy and the utmost expression of his genius in painting her. It was not only the loveliness of her form and features that enraptured him, but also her warmth of heart and joyous disposition. Romney's son describes her as "a young female of an artless and playful character, of extraordinary elegance and symmetry of form, of a most beautiful countenance glowing with health and animation." This was the vision that two or three times a week burst on Romney's studio in Cavendish Square.

The Honourable Charles Greville was curiously careful of the smaller proprieties, though he cared little for the larger ones, and either he or Mrs. Cadogan usually accompanied Emma on these visits to the painter. According to John Romney's account, "She always had a hackney-

coach to bring and take her away; and she never appeared in the streets without her mother." In the same "Life" of his father, he says, "In all Mr. Romney's intercourse with her, she was treated with the utmost respect, and her demeanour fully entitled her to it. In the characters in which she has been represented, she sat only for the face and a slight sketch of the attitude, and the drapery was painted either from other models or from the layman."

But there was a much deeper attachment between the artist and his lovely model than would be guessed from John Romney's careful sentences. Emma's warm heart went out to all who were good to her, and for Romney she soon felt a daughter's affection. She called him her friend, her "more than father;" she confided her little griefs and joys to him with the simplicity of a child, and in later years, as will be seen, wrote to him and spoke of him with sincere affection. There is, too, no doubt that his intense admiration of her beauty—in which she herself took the most naïve and open pleasure—was very acceptable to her. But she gave quite as much as she received. Hayley, writing of Romney to her in 1804, said, "You were not only his *model* but *his inspirer*, and he truly and gratefully said, that he owed a great part of his felicity as a painter to the *angelic kindness and intelligence* with which you used to animate his

diffident and tremulous spirits to the grandest efforts of art."

So thus by intercourse with Romney and the cultured Charles Greville, by the aid of singing-masters and instructors, and the study of "The Triumphs of Temper," Emma was educated in all the graces and not a few of the virtues.

CHAPTER III

"PLINY THE ELDER"

TO the little household in Edgware Row came, in 1784, a new and most agreeable visitor, Greville's uncle, Sir William Hamilton. He was, in a superlative degree, "the man of taste," and also—far more than his nephew—the "man of feeling." He was as well an antiquary and collector, not an idle *dilettante*, but one whose original research and genuine knowledge entitled him to the respect of the learned. In his youth he had been in the army, and served as an ensign in Holland under the Duke of Cumberland. "To the last," says Mr. Jeaffreson, "he retained the air and carriage of a man of arms." Soldier, man of letters, man of the world, philosopher, British Ambassador at Naples—such was the somewhat dazzling personality of the man who made Emma's acquaintance in the year 1784, and at once stepped into her favour as the admired uncle of her "dear Greville."

Sir William Hamilton's view of life is very completely expressed in a letter he wrote Emma

some years later. "My study of antiquities," he told her, "has kept me in constant thought of the perpetual fluctuation of everything. The whole art is, really, to live all the *days* of our life; and not, with anxious care, disturb the sweetest hour that life affords—which is, the present. Admire the Creator, and all His works to us incomprehensible; and do all the good you can upon earth; and take the chance of eternity without dismay."

Such was his philosophy, and he certainly lived up to it in the matter of taking freely of whatever enjoyment the present might offer him, whether it was a cameo, an Etruscan vase, an eruption of Vesuvius (he was a great authority on volcanoes), or the smiles of a charming girl.

His first wife had died two years before he met Emma. She was a good and noble-natured woman, though not beautiful, whom young William Hamilton had married "something against his inclination" when he was only twenty-seven, because she was an heiress. But however he may have fallen short of the higher motives in marrying her, he won and kept his wife's devoted attachment during all the years of their married life. He knew how to make a woman happy by the most graceful and constant little attentions. He was very much a man of the world, and by no means rigorous or lofty in his ideas of conduct; yet he had a certain sweetness of nature,

a certain kindly charm, that never lost its power over his delicate and retiring wife. After many years of marriage, when she felt the shadow of coming death draw near her, she wrote to him with deep and passionate affection: "How shall I express my love and tenderness to you, dearest of earthly blessings? My only attachment to this world has been my love to you, and you are my only regret in leaving it. My heart has followed your footsteps where ever you went, and you have been the source of all my joys. I would have preferred beggary with you to kingdoms without you, but all this must have an end—forget and forgive my faults and remember me with kindness."

The first Lady Hamilton is merely a shadow, a ghost, in the many-coloured story of her successor; but, as she moves for a moment through it, she breathes a nobler and serener atmosphere than often came near Emma.

Sir William Hamilton and his nephew Charles Greville were attached to each other by that strongest of all ties, the bond of mutual sympathies and tastes. They liked the same things and the same people, they pursued the same aims. Pictures, coins, vases, stirred them to intense enthusiasm, and in Emma Greville felt that he had something to show his critical and widely travelled uncle, which even he had never seen surpassed. Sir William was instantly and

entirely charmed. When Greville remarked complacently that Emma was "about as perfect a thing as can be found in all Nature," his uncle capped the climax—for in those days Art was considered superior to Nature—by saying, "She is better than anything in Nature; in her particular way she is finer than anything that is to be found in antique Art!"

So we have the somewhat extraordinary picture of the young and the middle-aged connoisseur studying Emma's charms, and exulting in her as though she was an antique cameo or an unearthed statue instead of a very human piece of flesh and blood.

But Emma did not mind. She was accustomed to pose, and she enjoyed her own beauty as much as any of them. The sensitiveness that would have shrunk from such cataloguing of her graces was always conspicuously lacking in her. She was at once too much the untutored child of Nature, and too much the victim of circumstances to have that feeling and that delicacy implanted in her easy young heart.

And both Greville and his uncle were men of refinement and breeding. There could have been nothing in their admiration, openly expressed though it was, to offend the not too susceptible Emma. Indeed, she took a great liking to Sir William Hamilton, and was soon on terms of bantering and affectionate friendship

with him, though at first she regarded him as "old"—he was fifty-five and she herself was not yet twenty. But Sir William was young for his years, upright and handsome looking, as well as charming in his manner and attentions to "the fair tea-maker of Edgware Row" (as he called her), so that Emma's impression of his age soon wore off. He flattered the girl's dawning intellectual powers by talking to her of philosophy and history and antique art, and by telling her of all the wonders of Italy. He taught her to call him "Pliny the Elder," drawing the parallel between himself and "Pliny the Younger," as he named Greville, so that Emma adopted the name gaily and with a great sense of airing her classical knowledge.

The summer brought a break-up of all these pleasant intimacies. Sir William Hamilton and his nephew had visits to pay at great houses in Scotland and elsewhere, to which the "fair tea-maker" naturally could not expect to go. But she required a change; sea-bathing was recommended, and more than all she longed to see again her child, the little Emma who had been born shortly before she went to live with Greville in 1782. Greville had faithfully paid for the maintenance of the child, as he had promised to do, but he did not want it in sight, and it had been cared for by old Mrs. Kidd at Hawarden.

Emma's letters to Greville during this period of separation give a very natural and attractive picture of her doings and her thoughts while away from him. She was to go to Chester and then decide for herself what watering-place to choose. From Chester, on the 12th of June, 1784, she writes—

"My dear Greville,—I have had no letter from you yett, which makes me unhappy. I can't go to Abbergelly, as it is forty miles, and a very uncumfortable place, and I am now going to Parkgate, as it is the only place beside High Lake I can go to; but I will try to go there. Pray, my dear Greville, do write directly, and lett it be left at the Post Office, Parkgate, till calld for. God bless you! I have got my poor Emma with me and I have took leave of all my friends. I have took her from a good home, and I hope she will prove worthy of your goodness to her and her mother. I should not write now tell I got to Parkgate, only I want to hear from you. Pray write, my dear Greville, directly, and send me word how to bile that bark; for parting with you made me so unhappy, I forgot the book. I can't stop to write, for the coach is waiting. My dear Greville, don't be angry, but I gave my granmother 5 guineas; for she had laid some out on her, [the child] and I would not take her awhay shabbily. But Emma shall pay

you. Adue my ever dear Greville, and believe yours ever truly. EMMA HART."

She adds in a postscript, "I will write on Monday again. My love to Sir W., and say everything that you can. I am low-spirited; so do excuse me. My dear Greville, I wish I was with you. God bless you."

Three days later she wrote again, this time from Parkgate—

"MY DEAREST GREVILLE,—You see by the date where I am gott and likely to be; and yett it is not through any neglect of seeking after other places. As to Abbergely it is 40 miles, and so dear that I could not with my mother and me and the child have been there under 2 guines and a half a week. It is grown such a fashionable place. And High Lake as 3 houses in it, and not one of them as is fit for a Christian. The best is a publick-house for the sailers of such ships as is obliged to put in there, so you see there is no possibility of going to either of those places. Has to where I am, I find it very comfortable, considering from you. I am in the house of a Laidy, whose husband is at sea. She and her granmother live together, and we board with her at present, till I hear from you. The price is high, but they don't lodge anybody without boarding; and as it is comfortable,

decent, and quiet, I thought it wou'd not ruin us, till I could have your oppionon, which I hope to have freely and without restraint, as, believe me, you will give it to one who will allways be happy to follow it, lett it be what it will; as I am sure you wou'd not lead me wrong. And though my little temper may have been sometimes high, believe me, I have allways thought you right in the end, when I have come to reason. I bathe, and find the water very soult. Here is a good many laidys batheing, but I have no society with them, as it is best not. So pray, my dearest Greville, write soon, and tell me what to do, as I will do just what you think proper; and tell me what to do with the child. For she is a great romp, and I can hardly master her. I don't think she is ugly, but I think her greatly improved. She is tall, good eyes and brows, and as to lashes, she will be passible; but she has overgrown all her cloaths. I am making and mending all as I can for her. . . . Pray, my dear Greville, do lett me come home as soon as you can; for I am all most broken-hearted being from you. I wish I could not think on you; but, if I was the greatest laidy in the world, I should not be happy from you. So don't lett me stay long. Tell Sir William everything you can, and tell him I am sorry our sittuation prevented me from giving him a kiss, but my heart was ready to break. But I will give him one, and entreat if

he will axcept it. Ask him how I looked, and lett him say something kind to me when you write. Indead, my dear Greville, you don't know how much I love you, and your behaiver to me, when we parted, was so kind, Greville, I don't know what to do; but I will make you a mends by my kind behaviour to you. For I have grattude, and I will show it you all I can. So don't think of my faults, Greville. Think of all my good, and blot out all my bad: for it is all gone and berried, never to come again. So, good-by, dear Greville. Think of nobody but me, for I have not a thought but of you. God bless you and believe me Your Truly and Affectionately. EMMA HART."

Again she adds a postscript to say, "Poor Emma gives her duty to you. I bathe her. The people is very civil to ous. I give a guinea and a half a week for ous all together but you will tell me what to do. God bless you, my dear Greville. I long to see you, for endead I am not happy from you, tho' I will stay if you like till a week before you go home, but I must go first. I hav had no letter from you, and you promised to write to me before I left home. It made me unhappy."

Her letters were added to day by day, so that they form a sort of diary of her doings—and, still

more, her feelings—while separated from her "ever dear Greville," and waiting and watching for the letters which were so long in coming. She begins her next epistle—

"How teadous does the time pass awhay till I hear from you. Endead, I should be miserable if I did not recollect on what happy terms we parted — parted, yess, but to meet again with tenfould happiness. . . . If you had not behaved with such angel-like goodness to me at parting, it would not have had such effect on me. I have done nothing but think of you since. And, oh, Greville, did you but know, when I so think, what thoughts—what tender thoughts, you would say 'Good God! and can Emma have such feeling sensibility? No, I never could think it. But now I may hope to bring her to conviction, and she may prove a valluable and amiable whoman!' True, Greville! and you shall not be disappointed. I will be everything you can wish. But mind you, Greville, your own great goodness has brought this about. You don't know what I am become. Would you think it, Greville? Emma—the wild, unthinking Emma, is a grave, thoughtful phylosopher. 'Tis true, Greville, and I will convince you I am, when I see you. But how I am runing on. I say nothing abbout this guidy, wild girl of mine. What shall we do with her, Greville? She is as wild and as thoughtless as somebody, when she

was a little girl; so you may gess how that is. . . . Would you believe, on Sattarday we had a little quarel, I mean Emma and me; and I did slap her on her hands, and when she came to kiss me and make it up, I took her on my lap and cried. Pray, do you blame me or not? Pray tell me. Oh, Greville, you don't know how I love her. Endead I do. When she comes and looks in my face and calls me 'mother,' endead I then truly am a mother, for all the mother's feelings rise at once, and tels me I am or ought to be a mother, for she has a wright to my protection; and she shall have it as long as I can, and I will do all in my power to prevent her falling into the error her poor miserable mother fell into. But why do I say miserable? Am not I happy abbove any of my sex, at least in my situation? Does not Greville love me, or at least like me? Does not he protect me? Is not he a father to my child? Why do I call myself miserable? No; it was a mistake, and I will be happy, chearful and kind, and do all my poor abbility will lett me, to return the fatherly goodness and protection he has shewn. Again, my dear Greville, the recollection of past scenes brings tears in my eyes. But they are tears of happiness. To think of your goodness is too much. But once for all, Greville, I will be grateful. Adue. It is near bathing time, and I must lay down my pen, and I won't finish till I see when the post comes,

whether there is a letter. He comes in abbout one o'clock. I hope to have a letter to-day. . . . Greville, I am oblidged to give a shilling a day for the bathing horse and whoman, and twopence a day for the dress. It is a great expense, and it fretts me when I think of it."

It is a sufficient proof of Emma's real attachment to Greville that she was so exercised in her mind about economy. She loved Greville; she had an idea already that he was somewhat straitened for money; so the expenditure of even a few pennies a day fretted her—when they were his pennies—who was naturally so large and easy in her dealings. She retained this careful feeling about money for some years after she went to Italy, and then circumstances did their work, and the woman who had been distressed at spending twopence a day over a bathing-dress became a gambler who loved to play for high stakes, and would lose £500 of Nelson's money at the faro-tables—so the story goes—with more indifference than she spent a shilling of Greville's.

But the Emma of Parkgate is not the Emma of Palermo; instead, she is a somewhat pathetic, trustful creature, half woman and half child, whose whole existence hangs for the time on the coming of a letter from the forgetful Greville. Two days later she adds to the letter already quoted—

"With what impatience do I sett down to

wright till I see the postman. But sure I shall have a letter to-day. Can you, Greville—no, you can't—have forgot your poor Emma allready? Tho' I am but a few weeks absent from you, my heart will not one moment leave you. I am allways thinking of you, and cou'd allmost fancy I hear you, see you; and think, Greville, what a disapointment when I find myself deceived, and ever nor never heard from you. But my heart wont lett me scold you. Endead, it thinks on you with two much tenderness. So do wright, my dear Greville. Don't you remember how you promised? Don't you recollect what you said at parting? how you shou'd be happy to see me again? O Greville, think on me with kindness! Think how many happy days weeks and years—I hope—we may yett pass. And think out of some that is past, there as been some little pleasure as well as pain; and, endead, did you but know how much I love you, you would freily forgive me any passed quarrels. For I now suffer for them, and one line from you would make me happy."

Greville's behaviour to Emma at this time is a forecast of his later behaviour to her when she had gone to Naples. His admiration and pleasure in her was that of the connoisseur and collector—she delighted his eyes, but she did not really stir that very self-contained heart of his. Absent from this woman, whom he considered

LADY HAMILTON

SKETCH. GEORGE ROMNEY

"as perfect a thing as can be found in all Nature," he was more or less indifferent to her appeals and her pathetic letters. He probably regarded the separation as salutary, not only for her health—"You can't think how soult the watter is," Emma told him with artless amazement—but also as a mental discipline. Greville had a strong strain of the pedant in his character, and was particularly gifted in a style of lofty reproof.

After a considerable interval he replied to Emma's long missives; but his first letter could not have been agreeable, for in reply to his second she was moved to say, "I was very happy, my dearest Greville, to hear from you, as your other letter vex'd me; you scolded me so." Then she goes on to discuss the education and the future of little Emma. Her wish to have the child with her permanently at the house in Edgware Row had been negatived by Greville—he was willing to pay for the child's keep and schooling, but he did not intend to burden himself with her presence. So Emma, who was adaptable to his wishes, even when they so markedly crossed her own, wrote to him: "I come into your whay athinking; hollidays spoils children. It takes there attention of from there scool, it gives them a bad habbit. When they have been a month and goes back this does not pleas them, and that is not wright, and the[y] do nothing but think when the[y] shall go back again. Now

Emma will never expect what she never had." In the postscript of the same letter she adds, "I bathe Emma, and she is very well and grows. Her hair will grow very well on her forehead, and I don't think her nose will be very snub. Her eyes is blue and pretty. But she don't speak through her nose, but she speaks countryfied, but she will forget it. We squable sometimes; still she is fond of me, and endead I love her. For she is sensible. So much for Beauty."

One further extract from this Parkgate correspondence, in reference to Sir William Hamilton, is interesting in view of later events. Emma sends him her "kind love," and bids Greville "Tell him next to you I love him abbove any body, and that I wish I was with him to give him a kiss."

CHAPTER IV

A BARGAIN AND ITS RESULTS

EMMA returned to Edgware Row, all eager to begin her domestic life again, though already aware from Greville's "kind instructing letter," that he meant to rearrange things somewhat. She writes to him in a letter of this time—

"You shall have your appartment to yourself, you shall read, wright, or sett still, just as you please; for I shall think myself happy to be under the seam roof with Greville, and do all I can to make it agreable, without disturbing him in any pursuits that he can follow, to employ himself in at home or else whare. For your absence has taught me that I ought to think myself happy if I was within a mile of you."

A week or two after Emma's return, when everything was in readiness in his little household, Greville himself came home. But he was not so eager as Emma to begin again the game which was her "whole existence" to the woman. His financial difficulties were pressing upon him.

The "reasonable plan," as recommended by his relatives, was to marry an heiress, which he could hardly do while he had Emma on his hands; and the impulse to get rid of her was heightened by the fact that Sir William had signified his willingness to become responsible for her.

In the whole of the cold-blooded transaction which eventually transferred the trusting Emma to Naples, the only good thing that can be said for Greville is that not even in the pursuit of the desirable heiress did he intend to turn Emma adrift as Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh had done. It was his intention to give her a little income of her own, and he begged Sir William also to settle something on her. In a letter to his uncle he says, with a very just appreciation of Emma's character at this time—

"She shall never want, and if I decide sooner than I am forced to stop by necessity, it will be that I may give her part of my pittance; and, if I do so it must be by sudden resolution and by putting it out of her power to refuse it, for I know her disinterestedness to be such that she will rather encounter any difficulty than distress me. I should not write to you thus, if I did not think you seem'd as partial as I am to her."

Another portion of this letter contains the gist of the business, put forth without any of

that subtle circumlocution which was generally so pleasing to the Honourable Charles Greville: "If you did not chuse a wife," he tells his uncle, "I wish the tea-maker of Edgware Rowe was yours, if I could without banishing myself from a visit to Naples. I do not know how to part with what I am not tired with: I do not know how to go on, and I give her every merit of prudence and moderation and affection."

Two of Greville's interests would be served by the transference of Emma to his uncle's care. Sir William would be less likely to marry if he had the "fair tea-maker" to amuse him, and as Greville had reason to regard himself as his childless uncle's heir, he did not wish Sir William to marry again. Also, once Emma was off his hands he could look round for the young lady of wealth and accomplishments who was to repair his fortunes. It may be said, in passing, that he never found her, which was, perhaps, in the phrase of the old country people who look directly for the hand of Providence in every event, "a judgment" on him.

But meanwhile Emma was unconscious of all the schemes to get rid of her; unconscious of all the nicely veiled transactions which were already turning the path of her life towards the point where she and Nelson met.

Romney was once more painting her portrait —this time for Sir William Hamilton. She was

painted as a "Bacchante," with a dog who leaps and barks at her while she moves forward with archly smiling face, her unbound hair and her long skirts flowing behind her in fine, free lines; it is one of the most exquisite of his pictures of the "divine lady." Sir William Hamilton might well desire to have the original as well as the "counterfeit presentment." Greville wrote to him at this time: "Emma is very grateful for your remembrance. Her picture shall be sent by the first ship. I wish Romney yet to mend the dog."

It is sad to think of the poor "Bacchante," smiling so gaily upon the little world that was her all, and that she thought loved and cared for her, while the whole time Greville was planning —with a nice regard for every one's feelings but Emma's—to hand her over to his uncle.

It is not necessary to go into all the plotting and counterplotting that went on for many months between the two. Greville was sufficiently sensible of the difficulty of getting rid of a girl so affectionate and devoted to him that she had already declined two offers of honourable marriage and at least one offer of a similar position considerably more gilded. She would only go to Naples if she was under a misapprehension as to the nature and duration of her visit. So Greville wrote to Sir William—

"If you could form a plan by which you could

"BACCHANTE"
GEORGE ROMNEY

have a trial, and could invite her and tell her that I ought not to leave England, and that I cannot afford to go on; and state it as a kindness to me if she would accept your invitation, she would go with pleasure. She is to be six weeks at some bathing place; and when you could write an answer to this, and inclose a letter to her, I could manage it; and either by land, by the coach to Geneva, and from thence by *Vetturino* forward her, or else by sea. I must add that I could not manage it so well later; after a month, and absent from me, she would consider the whole more calmly. If there was in the world a person she loved so well as yourself after me, I could not arrange with so much *sang-froid;* and I am sure I would not let her go to you, if any risque of the usual coquetry of the sex [were] likely to give uneasiness."

Sir William Hamilton himself, when in London, had painted to Emma in vivid colours the advantages and charms of Italy; how her beauty and her voice would alike expand and glow in that sunny atmosphere, promising that with Italian cultivation she might well become the first singer of her day. The people of Italy, impulsive and ardent, the radiant climate, the gorgeous scenery of the Bay of Naples, the gay, dirty, fascinating city itself, all were exactly suited to her temperament and character. Paddington Green must have seemed a little dull to Emma

as Sir William drew his skilful contrasts. But then London and Paddington Green meant Greville, and so her affectionate heart swung the balance even.

It was something over a year from the time of the British Ambassador's return to Naples before Greville considered his plans sufficiently well laid and the occasion ripe to bring about Emma's transplantation.

So, according to arrangement, one day at the end of 1785 a letter arrived from Sir William Hamilton inviting Emma and her mother to pay him a visit of several months' duration, so that Emma might cultivate her fine voice in a congenial atmosphere, and Greville rearrange his financial affairs in England. At the end of the time Greville was to come out to Naples and fetch them home. At first Emma was all tears and protestations; she could not endure to be separated from Greville, "whom you know I love tenderly," as she told Sir William. She found that six weeks at a watering-place away from him made her quite wretched; how could she contemplate calmly a separation of six months or more?

But when Greville made it plain to her that she would be serving his interests with his uncle by consenting to go, that in no other way could she so please him and show her devotion, her protests were at an end—though not her tears.

The day before she arrived in Naples, Sir William had written to his nephew: "You may be assured I will comfort her for the loss of you as well as I am able, but I know, from the small specimens during your absence from London, that I shall have at times many tears to wipe from those charming eyes." He, at any rate, did not make the mistake of under-valuing the strength of her attachment to Greville.

The excitement of the journey through Europe under the care of her mother and Mr. Gavin Hamilton, the enchantments of the Bay of Naples spread beneath her windows, could not divert her thoughts from the man she had parted from so reluctantly and sadly, even though she thought the parting only temporary. The day of her arrival, the 26th of April, 1786, was also her birthday; and a few days later she wrote to Greville—

"I dreaded setting down to write, for I try to appear as chearful before Sir William as I could, and I am sure to cry the moment I think of you. For I feel more and more unhappy at being separated from you, and if my fatal ruin depends on seeing you, I will and must at the end of the sumer. For to live without you is impossible. I love you to that degree that at this time there is not a hardship upon hearth either of poverty, cold, death, or even to walk barefooted to Scotland to see you, but

what I would undergo. Therefore my dear, dear Greville, if you do love me, for my sake, try all you can to come hear as soon as possible. . . . I find it is not either a fine horse, or a fine coach, or a pack of servants, or plays, or operas, can make happy. It is you that as it in your power either to make me very happy or very miserable." Referring to the day of her arrival, she goes on, "It was my birthday, and I was very low-spirited. Oh God! that day that you used to smile on me and stay at home, and be kind to me—that *that* day I should be at such a distance from you! But my comfort is that I rely upon your promise, and September or October I shall see you."

Sir William Hamilton had made all possible arrangements for her comfort and that of her mother, Mrs. Cadogan, who was to lend her easy chaperonage and throw a mantle of propriety over everything. The British Ambassador did not at first receive them in his own house, or lend them his carriages and liveried servants, so well known in Naples. To have done so would have exposed Emma Hart to misconstruction; so he fitted up for her an apartment of four rooms looking out on the Bay of Naples, he gave her a carriage and a boat of her own, and servants in her own livery. Besides these things, which she shared with her mother, he made her many personal gifts. She writes a

delighted catalogue to Greville, diverted for the moment from her grief and dimly moving fears by the feminine pleasure in pretty things.

"Sir William as give me a camlet shawl, like my old one," she tells him. "I know you will be pleased to hear that, and he as given me a beautiful gown, cost 25 guineas (India painting on wite sattin) and several little things of Lady Hamilton's, and is going to by me some muslin dresses loose, to tye with a sash for the hot weather — made like the turkey dresses, the sleeves tyed in fowlds with ribban and trimd with lace. In short, he is always contriving what he shall get for me. The people admire my English dresses. But the blue hat, Greville, pleases most. Sir William is quite inchanted with it."

What a picture is conjured up by the artless little statement that "the blue hat pleases most"! One can almost see the pretty creature, with her English freshness of colouring, looking out from under the becoming brim of her blue hat— looking with young interest and pleasure at the Italians, who already frantically admired her; looking most of all, rather wistful and afraid under her smiles, at Sir William, whose manner already disturbed her. She liked admiration; she had enjoyed the ambassador's delight in her beauty when he was in London and Greville was at hand, but here in Naples alone it was not

quite the same: he was less fatherly, more lover-like. She tells Greville, "He as never dined out since I came hear; and endead, to speak the truth, he is never out of my sight. He breakfasts, dines, supes, and is constantly by me, looking in my face. . . . He thinks I am grown much more ansome then I was. He does nothing all day but look at me and sigh."

There are evidences of a tendency to panic in her letter; but she suppresses her fears as too bad for reality, and tells her distant and faithless "protector," "I respect Sir William, I have a very great regard for him, as the uncle and friend of you, Greville. But he can never be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend."

The day following her alarm took more definite shape. Angry, puzzled, and panic-stricken, she adds this paragraph to her letter—

"I have only to say I enclose this I wrote yesterday, and I will not venture myself now to wright any more, for my mind and heart are torn by different passions, that I shall go mad. Only, Greville, remember your promise of October. Sir William says you never mentioned to him abbout coming to Naples at all. But you know the consequence of your not coming for me. Endead, my dear Greville, I live but in the hope of seeing you, and if you do not come hear, lett whatt will be the consequence, I will come

to England. I have had a conversation this morning with Sir William, that has made me mad. He speaks—no, I do not know what to make of it. But, Greville, my dear Greville, wright some comfort to me. . . . Pray, for God's sake, wright to me and come to me, for Sir William shall not be anything to me but your friend."

Other letters followed this one, growing more passionate, more frightened, as the weeks of Greville's silence went on. She wrote to him fourteen times, entreating an explanation, advice, a word—anything but the blank negation of his silence. How strangely repeated was her situation when she wrote her seven despairing, unanswered letters to Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh! And the old cry was yet on her lips—differently worded and better spelt, perhaps, but still the same at heart, "O, Grevell, what shall I dow? What shall I dow?"

She could not at first bring herself to believe the coldly treacherous part he had played to her—in spite of various "conversations" with Sir William Hamilton. She was too fond to be proud, and after many entreaties, many tears, she wrote to Greville at the end of July—

"I am now onely writing to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is onely a farewell. Sure I have deserved this for the sake of the love you once had for me. Think, Greville,

of our former connexion, and don't despise me. I have not used you ill in any one thing. I have been from you going of six months, and you have wrote one letter to me, enstead of which I have sent fourteen to you. So pray let me beg of you, my much loved Greville, only one line from your dear, dear hands. You don't know how thankful I shall be for it. For if you knew the misery I feel, oh! your heart wou'd not be intirely shut up against me; for I love you with the truest affection. Don't let any body sett you against me. Some of your friends—your foes perhaps, I don't know what to stile them—have long wisht me ill. But, Greville, you never will meet with anybody that has a truer affection for you than I have, and I onely wish it was in my power to shew you what I cou'd do for you. As soon as I know your determination, I shall take my own measures. If I don't hear from you, and that you are coming according to promise, I shall be in England at Cristmas at farthest. Don't be unhappy at that, I will see you once more for the last time. I find life is insupportable without you. Oh! my heart is intirely broke. Then for God's sake, my ever dear Greville, do write to me some comfort. I don't know what to do. I am now in that state, I am incapable of anything. I have a language-master, a singing-master, musick, etc., but what is it for? If it was to amuse you, I shou'd be

LADY HAMILTON (EMMA HART

GEORGE ROMNEY

happy. But, Greville, what will it avail me? I am poor, helpless, and forlorn. I have lived with you 5 years, [this is a mistake, it was four] and you have sent me to a strange place, and no one prospect but thinking you was coming to me. . . . Then what am I to do? what is to become of me?—But excuse me, my heart is ful, I tell you,—give me one guiney a week for everything, and live with me, and I will be contented."

At last Greville replied, but only to destroy her hopes and her faith in him utterly by telling her that he had handed her over to his uncle, and that she would best consult her own future and his pleasure by accommodating herself to Sir William's wishes. All Emma's scorned love and womanly feeling rose up enraged, she cried out upon him in bitter and furious words—surely at the moment a dagger would have come kinder to her outraged hand than a pen.

"As to what you write me to oblidge Sir William, I will not answer you. For oh, if you knew what pain I feel in reading those lines. . . . Nothing can express my rage! I am all madness! Greville, to advise me!—you that used to envy my smiles! . . . But I will not, no, I will not rage. If I was with you I wou'd murder you and myself booth. I will leave of and try to get more strength, for I am now very ill with a cold. . . . Nothing shall

ever do for me but going home to you. If that is not to be, I will except of nothing. I will go to London, their go into every excess of vice till I dye, a miserable, broken-hearted wretch, and leave my fate as a warning to young whomen never to be two good; for now you have made me love you, you made me good, you have abbandoned me; and some violent end shall finish our connexion, if it is to finish. But oh! Greville, you cannot, you must not give me up. You have not the heart to do it. You love me I am sure; and I am willing to do everything in my power, and what will you have more? And I only say this is the last time I will either beg or pray, do as you like."

Again she tells him, "I always knew, I had a foreboding since first I began to love you, that I was not destined to be happy; for their is not a King or Prince on hearth that cou'd make me happy without you."

She would have saved herself much grief and humiliation of spirit if she had remembered and acted upon a saying of Greville's in one of his very earliest letters to her. "I have never seen a woman," he told her, "clever enough to keep a man who was tired of her." Not only was Greville somewhat tired of her—in spite of his protestations to the contrary—but she also interfered with his material interests, which were always paramount with him. Therefore her most pathetic

letters, her tears, her reproaches, were all in vain, they made no impression upon the hard, clear surface of his self-love and self-satisfaction. He believed himself incapable of making a blunder in taste or good breeding—and taste and good breeding represented all his outlook, while they were a very small matter in Emma's.

Greville was capable of writing to Sir William Hamilton a few months after his cruel break with the girl who loved him, yet with quite sincere conviction—

"I so long foresaw that a moment of separation must arrive, that I never kept the connexion, but on a footing of perfect liberty to her. Its commencement was not of my seeking, and hitherto it has contributed to her happiness. She knows and reflects often on the circumstances which she cannot forget, and in her heart she cannot reproach me of having acted otherwise than a kind and attentive friend. But you have now rendered it possible for her to be respected and comfortable, and if she has not talked herself out of the true view of her situation she will retain the protection and affection of us both. . . . Knowing all this, infinite have been my pains to make her respect herself, and act fairly, and I had always proposed to continue her friend, altho' the connexion ceased."

So far the virtuous and upright Greville.

He was incapable of seeing his conduct in the light in which it appeared to more generous souls. He told himself that he had done well for Emma, as for himself. Her worldly circumstances were improved, her material prosperity was assured, so long as she continued to please Sir William Hamilton. Hard and unspiritual in his own nature, in spite of his culture and refinement, he recked little of the blow he had dealt Emma by shattering her faith and trust in him. By his treatment he did more than any other man who came into her life to destroy the child in her—the simple uncritical belief in goodness which she had strongly, in spite of her own strayings from the path of virtue. Flung back upon herself as she had been by his abandonment of her, it was no wonder, it was only human, that she at last turned to bay and wrote to him: "It is not to your intrest to disoblidge me, for you don't know the power I have hear. . . . If you affront me, I will make him marry me."

By writing that threat Emma showed herself a subtly changed creature. She had learned her lesson: in future she would be less the victim of men's passions and more the moulder of her own fortunes. "Love, in its unselfishness," says Captain Mahan, "passed out of her life with Greville. Other men might find her pliant, pleasing, seductive; he alone knew her

as disinterested." This judgment is somewhat sweeping, but substantially just. Ambition and the love of power were dawning upon the horizon of the country girl, who hitherto had been content to give everything and receive little.

CHAPTER V

NAPLES

IT would have been impossible to find a place or a society more entirely fitted to expand Emma's characteristic gifts and graces than Naples from the year 1786 to the year of the Battle of the Nile. She had naturally a southern temperament: joyous, responsive, thinking little of the morrow, fully alive to all visible beauty—to all beauty, that is, which could be touched and seen, but insensitive to the austere and spiritual charm of things unseen—"the visionary gleam, the glory and the dream." Her native tendency towards the theatrical side of life was enhanced by the atmosphere of Naples, where the priests, the Lazzaroni, the royalties, gave to everything she saw the air of a gorgeous opera, played in a sunshine so brilliant as to have some of the dazzling qualities of limelight, and backed by the unsurpassable stage-setting of the Bay of Naples and the smoking crater of Vesuvius.

For the first few years of her life there it was all gaiety and flowers, balls, receptions,

"Attitudes," compliments, a king in the train of her admirers. Such was the opening scene. Then the stage darkened, and the Muse of History came stalking across the boards, arrayed in all the pomp and panoply of war. It was—

> "A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!"

Storms, revolutions, bloodshed followed, while warships — the battered victors of the Nile — rode at anchor on the blue waters of the Bay of Naples, and the fortresses of Uovo and Nuovo, on which Emma had looked out many years, became the centres of anarchy and rebellion. Emma's spirit rose to these great events. Her courage, her resource, her readiness were undoubted; she played her part well when the time came, and there can be little question that she saw herself and the Queen of Naples as the twin heroines of a drama which was being acted before the eyes of Europe.

But in the late summer of 1786 wars and revolutions were yet dim upon the horizon, the only disturbances were thunder, lightning, an eruption of Vesuvius. In one of her letters, Emma writes: "We have dreadful thunder and lightning. It fell at the Maltese minister's just by our house and burnt [h]is beds and wires, etc. I have now persuaded Sir William to put up a conductor to his house. The lava runs a

little, but the mountain is very full and we expect an irruption every day."

By the end of the year Emma and her mother had left their own apartment, and moved into the Palazzo Sessa, the British Embassy at that time. Nothing which money, imagination, and taste could suggest for her comfort and pleasure had been left undone by Sir William Hamilton. Goethe, during his Italian journey, saw and admired her boudoir, which, "furnished in the English taste," he considered "most delightful," while the "outlook from its corner window" was "unique." He admired the apartment, and, somewhat against his will, he was also compelled to admire and marvel at its mistress.

"The Chevalier Hamilton," he writes, "so long resident here as English Ambassador, so long, too, connoisseur and student of Art and Nature, has found their counterpart and acme with exquisite delight in a lovely girl—English, and some twenty years of age. She is exceedingly beautiful and finely built. She wears a Greek garb becoming her to perfection. She then merely loosens her locks, takes a pair of shawls, and effects changes of postures, moods, gestures, mien, and appearance that make one really feel as if one were in some dream. Here is visible complete, and bodied forth in movements of surprising variety, all that so many artists have sought in vain to fix and render.

MEDALLION PORTRAIT FROM LIFE

FREDERICK REHBERG

Successively standing, kneeling, seated, reclining, grave, sad, sportive, teasing, abandoned, penitent, alluring, threatening, agonised. One follows the other, and grows out of it. She knows how to choose and shift the simple folds of her single kerchief for every expression, and to adjust it into a hundred kinds of headgear. Her elderly knight holds the torches for her performance, and is absorbed in his soul's desire. In her he finds the charm of all antiques, the fair profiles on Sicilian coins, the Apollo Belvedere himself. . . ."

That is one of the earliest appreciations and descriptions of the famous "Attitudes" in which Emma expressed with plastic grace the dreams of artists, and proved herself "the heroine of a thousand things." All who ever saw those "Attitudes" were enchanted with them, however unfavourably they might regard Emma herself, and in later years, when her beauty had degenerated and her fame was somewhat too loudly noised abroad, she had many critics, especially of her own sex.

But these, her early triumphant years at Naples, were unmarred by criticism or calumny. Her position in Sir William Hamilton's house was apparent to all, but the easy Neapolitans were not concerned to trouble themselves about it, while many of the English visitors to Naples who did not wish to deny themselves the pleasure of visiting the Palazzo Sessa and there beholding

the most famous beauty of the time and place, affected to believe that she was secretly married to the British Ambassador. Almost the only distinction which marked her position from that of a wife was that the Queen of Naples did not receive her at Court, though she admired her looks, and showed her "every distant civility." The King was frankly enchanted, followed her about, expressing a sort of dumb and animal-like amazement at her loveliness. "The king," wrote Emma in one of her letters, with not unnatural exultation (accompanied by a lamentable lack of h's) "as eyes, he as a heart, and I have made an impression on it." Neither the eyes nor the heart of Ferdinand were of much value, but Emma could not be expected to know this, and she may be forgiven if she was a little dazzled by the first royal smiles that had come her way. On one occasion she describes how on Sundays the King dines at "Paysilipo" (as she spells it), "and he allways come every Sunday before the casina in his boat to look at me. We had a small deplomatic party, and we was sailing in our boat, the K. directly came up, put his boat of musick next us, and made all the French horns and the wholl band play. He took of his hat, and sett with his hatt on his knees all the wile, and when we was going to land he made his bow, and said it was a sin he could not speak English."

But the King's attentions did no more than

ATTITUDES FROM LIFE

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lightly flatter her vanity. With a somewhat laughable air of prudence, she writes: "We keep the good-will of the other party mentioned abbove [the Queen], and never give him any encouragement."

In a difficult position and a dangerous society she really deserved the credit of acting with a sweetness that charmed all, and a prudence which repelled the unworthy. When at Sorrento, she had a slight encounter with one of the moth-like men who hovered round this particularly charming candle. "One asked me if I left a love at Naples, that I left them so soon. I pulled my lip at him, to say, 'I pray, do you take me for an Italian? . . . Look, sir, I am English. I have one Cavaliere servente, and I have brought him with me,' pointing to Sir William."

Sir William Hamilton's devotion knew no bounds — save marriage. Everything that a woman who was content to forego the name of wife could wish, was hers. And all was given with such kindness, such genuine admiration and delight, such freedom from the lecturing and reproving tone to which Greville had accustomed her, that it is no matter for wonder if Emma's susceptible heart and really affectionate nature began to sway the girl who had declared she could not live without Greville into making Sir William the genial sun of her hemisphere. In time, he too was to pale into a minor luminary;

but up to the year after the Nile, Emma revolved round him with grace and enthusiasm.

Her enthusiasm, her tremendous store of vitality, was one of the causes of her success, as it was also one of the reasons of her lack of ordinary moral standards. After such an experience as Greville's cold and cruel abandonment, most women would have been too broken to go on again. Not so Emma: she grieved, she implored, she wept, and there is no doubt that a certain child-like simplicity—which had survived the treatment of Captain Willet-Payne and Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh—died in her at this time. But in less than a year she was clinging to Sir William Hamilton with affectionate attachment, and declaring there was no one like him in the world. Then, when she had become Lady Hamilton—for the first time in her life holding an assured position, and with every inducement not to marr what she had won by years of waiting—she met Nelson, and flung herself upon him with undiminished ardour and all the raptures of a girl in love for the first time. It is a spectacle at which the chronicler can only marvel, feeling that it is not reasonable to judge such a woman by the usual standards, and feeling, above all, that in her extraordinary vitality may be found some explanation, some condonation of her conduct. Emma Hamilton was never jaded—after the most devastating

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experiences she arose with a head unbowed and optimist eyes fronting the yet unshattered future. It is courage distinctly, and moral courage, too, though lacking in the finer spiritual qualities. But in judging her career and character, this courage and this marvellous power of recovery must not be forgotten.

She never could resist the enticing voice that called to her in the tone of kindness and affection: she responded with fatal quickness and no forethought. In the words of an American poet, who would have fully appreciated her vitality, she might have said, and thus summed up all her blunders and mistakes—

"Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps anywhere around the globe."

After parting from Greville, and until the time when she met Nelson, Emma regarded Sir William Hamilton with real affection and devotion. In one of her letters she says, "He is so kind, so good and tender to me that I love him so much that I have not a warm look left for the Neapolitans." When he tore himself away to go shooting with the king at Persano, Emma wrote to him in the same agitated and warm-hearted manner she had used to Greville so short a time before—

"I have just received your dear sweet letter,"

she tells him. "It has charmed me. I don't know what to say to you to thank you in words kind enough. Oh, how kind! Do you call me your dear friend? Oh, what a happy creature is your Emma!—me that had no friend, no protector, no body that I could trust, and now to be the friend, the Emma, of Sir William Hamilton! If I had words to thank you, that I may not thus be choaked with meanings, for which I can find no utterance! Think only, my dear Sir William, what I would say to you, if I could express myself, only to thank you a thousand times."

Temporarily separated from him on a later occasion, she writes, within a few hours of the parting—

"I can't be happy till I have wrote to you, my dearest Sir William, tho' it is so lattely I saw you. But what of that to a person that loves as I do. One hour's absence is a year, and I shall count the hours and moments till Saturday, when I shall find myself once more in your dear kind arms, my dear Sir William, my friend, my All, my earthly Good, my Kind home in one, you are to me eating, drinking and cloathing, my comforter in distress. Then why shall I not love you? Endead, I must and ought, whilst life is left in me, or reason to think on you. I believe it is right I should be seperated from you sometimes, to make me know

ATTITUDES FROM LIFE

FREDERICK REHBERG

myself, for I don't know till you are absent how dear you are to me; and I won't tell you how many tears I shed for you this morning, and even now I can't stop them, for in thinking on you, my heart and eyes fill. . . . I have had a long lesson, and am going now to have another, for musick quiets my mind, so that I shall study much tell I see you. I can't finish this subject tell I have thank'd you, my dearest Sir William, for having given me the means of at least amusing myself a little, if in your absence I can be amused. I owe everything to you, and shall for ever with gratitude remember it. Pray, one little line, if you have time, just that I may kiss your name. . . . Take care of your dear self."

In an earlier letter, written to Sir William while he was absent on one of his sporting expeditions, there is a touch of feminine pity for the victims of the sportsmen that shows how little hardened her heart was to suffering, though later a base calumny was to accuse her of exulting in the execution of Caracciolo. "I am glad you had some good sport," she writes, evidently using a conventional phrase, without considering its meaning, "I should like to see that that is 200 weight, for it must be a fine one; but the other 2, that got of wounded, they must be somewere in great pain."

But even for the pleasure of killing his dumb fellow-creatures Sir William Hamilton did not

leave his fair Emma often. She was so sweet and gay, such a joy to watch and to educate, that he could not tear himself away from her. She had masters of all sorts, to teach her Italian, to teach her singing; while the Palazzo Sessa was thronged with painters and sculptors, all occupied—by Sir William's orders—in perpetuating her beauty on canvas, in marble, in cameos. Inexhaustible good temper, as well as a considerable share of vanity, must have been necessary to enable her to endure the strain. In one of her letters of this period she says—

"The house is ful of painters painting me. He [Sir William] as now got nine pictures of me, and 2 a painting. Marchant is cutting my head in stone, that is in camea for a ring. There is another man modeling me in wax, and another in clay. All the artists is come from Rome to study from me, that Sir William as fitted up a room, that is calld the painting-room. Sir William is never a moment from me. He goes no where without me. He as no diners but what I can be of the party. No body comes without the[y] are civil to me. We have allways good company. . . . My old apartments is made the musick-rooms, where I have my lessons in the morning. Our house at Caserta is fitting up eleganter this year, a room making for my musick, and a room fitting up for my master, as he goes with ous. Sir William says he loves nothing but me, likes no

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person to sing but me, and takes delight in all I do, and all I say, to see me happy. . . . It is a most extraordinary thing that my voice is totally altered. It is the finest *soprana* you ever heard, so that Sir William shuts his eyes and thinks one of the *Castratos* is singing; and, what is most extraordinary that my shake, or tril, what you call it, is so very good in every note, my master says that, if he did not feil and see and no that I am a substance, he would think I was an angel."

In another and earlier letter she had carefully detailed for the benefit of the admiring Sir William some of the compliments on her music that she received during his absence :—

"Mr. Hart went awhay yesterday with his head turned; I sung so well Handell's 3 songs . . . that you never saw a man so delighted. He said it was the most extraordinary thing he ever knew. But what struck him was holding on the notes and going from the high to the low notes so very neat. He says I shall turn the heads of the English. . . . Galucci played solo some of my solfegos and you whold have thought he would have gone mad. He says he had heard a great deal of me. But he never saw or heard of such a whoman before. He says when he first came in, I frightened him with a Majesty and Juno look that I receved him with. Then he says that whent of on being more acquainted, and I enchanted him by my politeness and the

maner in which I did the honors, and then I made him allmost cry with Handels; and with the comick he could not contain himself, for he says he never saw the tragick and comick muse blended so happily together."

Emma certainly did not mind "the butter spread too thick!"

In the late summer of 1787 she commenced writing again to Charles Greville, keeping a sort of journal-letter for his benefit which gives a vivacious account of her doings for about four months. She allows herself the luxury of a few reproaches at the beginning, but it should be remembered that the generous creature never said or did anything that could injure the nephew's prospects with his uncle, though it was fully in her power to have done so had she cherished a taste for revenge.

"Altho' you never think me worth writing to," she says, "yet I cannot so easily forget you, and whenever I have had any particular pleasure, I feil as tho' I was not right tell I had communicated it to my dearest Greville. For you will ever be dear to me, and tho' we cannot be together, lett ous corespond as freinds. I have a happiness in hearing from you, and a comfort in communicating my little storeys to you, because I flatter myself that you still love the name of that Emma, that was once very dear to you."

After this little outburst, she tells him of her

ATTITUDES FROM LIFE

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visits and her singing, and how she draws pictures of Vesuvius—all with a charming simplicity and friendliness that Greville certainly did not deserve. Then she goes on—

"We was last night up Vesuvus [if she could draw the mountain she couldn't spell its name!] at twelve a clock, and in my life I never saw so fine a sight. The lava runs about five mile down from the top; for the mountain is not burst, as ignorant people say it is. But, when we got to the Hermitage, there was the finest fountain of liquid fire falling down a great precipice, and as it run down it sett fire to the trees and brush-wood, so that the mountain looked like one entire mountain of fire. We saw the lava surround the poor hermit's house, and take possession of the chapel, notwithstanding it was covered with pictures of Saints and other religios preservitaves against the fury of nature. For me, I was enraptured. I could have staid all night there, and I have never been in charity with the moon since, for it looked so pale and sickly; and the red-hot lava served to light up the moon, for the light of the moon was nothing to the lava. We met the Prince Royal on the mountain. But his foolish tuters onely took him up a little whay, and did not lett him stay 3 minuets; so, when we asked him how he liked it, he said, 'Bella ma poca roba,' when, if they had took him five hundred yards higher, he would have seen the noblest, sublimest

sight in the world. But, poor creatures, the[y] were frightened out of their sences, and glad to make a hasty retreat.—O, I shall kill my selfe with laughing! Their has been a prince paying us a visit. He is sixty years of age, one of the first families, and as allways lived at Naples, and when I told him I had been to Caprea, he asked me if I went there by land. Only think, what ignorance! I staired at him and asked him who was his tutor."

It was very delightful to this daughter of a village blacksmith to be able to "stair" at princes and ask them who was responsible for their amazing ignorance! It was delightful, also, to be entertained as the guest of honour on board a Dutch man-of-war. She describes everything for Greville's benefit in the same lengthy letter—

"There was the Comodore, and the Captain and four more of the first officers waited to conduct ous to the ship. The 2 ships was dress'd out so fine in all the collowrs; the men all put in order; a band of musick and all the marrine did their duty, and when we went on board, twenty peices of cannon fired. But as we past the frigate, she fired all her guns, that I wish you had seen it. We sett down thirty to dine,—me at the head of the table, mistress of the feast, drest all in virgin white and my hair all in ringlets, reaching allmost to my heals. I asure you it is so long, that I realy look'd and moved amongst

ATTITUDES FROM LIFE

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it, Sir William said so. That night there was a great opera at St. Carlo's, in honor of the King of Spain's name-day. So St. Carlos was illumanated, and everybody in great galla. Well, I had the finest dress made up on purpose, as I had a box near the King and Queen. My gown was purple sattin, wite sattin peticoat trimd with crape and spangles. My cap lovely, from Paris, all white fethers. My hair was to have been delightfully dres'd, as I have a very good hair-dresser. But for me unfortunately, the diner on board did not finish tell half-past-five, English. Then the Comodore would have another bottle to drink to the loveliest whoman in the world, as the[y] cald me at least. I whispered to Sir William and told him I should be angry with him, if he did not get up to go, as we was to dress, and it was necessary to be at the theatre before the royal party. So at last the[y] put out the boat, to offer a salute from the 2 ships of all the guns. We arrived on shoar with the Comodore and five princapal officers, and in we all crowd into our coach, which is large. We just got in time to the Opera. The Comodore went with ous, and the officers came next and attended my box all the time, and behaved to me as tho' I was a Queen,"

Emma's own letters and all the personal records of this time give the most brilliant picture of her success—she quotes with much satisfaction

the praise of Prince Dietrichstein, "he says I am a dymond of the first watter, and the finest creature on the hearth." The praise of princes is not necessarily worth much, but in spite of her vanity there was a sort of native sweetness and overflowing kindness in Emma that won the praise of others than princes — servants and peasants loved her, good old priests and a whole convent-full of nuns were quite enchanted with her, and in spite of her reprehensible position and her amazing beauty society ladies admired and liked her, even when her unaided eyes outshone their diamonds, and her simple "wite sattin" put their expensive splendours in the shade. It was a real triumph for Emma—won by tact and an unaffected warm heart. Ladies of fashion, as a rule, are very merciless to a woman in the "Signora Hart's" position. Slights and stabs no doubt she had to endure, but they were comparatively few, and the real wonder is that her head was not completely turned by all the adulation she received. The Empress of Russia commissioned her portrait; and when Madame Vigée Le Brun, flying from distracted France, came to Naples, Sir William Hamilton invited her to paint his "fair Grecian," as he called Emma. She was painted once more as a Bacchante, resting on a leopard-skin in a cave by the sea, a wine-cup in her hand. It lacks the wild-wood grace and radiant charm of Romney's

LADY HAMILTON AS "A BACCHANTE"

MADAME VIGÉE LE BRUN

portraits, and is a little heavy. But though not conspicuously successful in the picture, Madame Le Brun described her looks with admiration, "Her lovely face was very animated. She had an enormous quantity of beautiful chestnut hair, which, when loose, completely covered her: thus, as a Bacchante, she was perfect."

But Emma Hart was not content to remain the "perfect Bacchante." New abilities and powers were making themselves felt through all her gaieties and love of admiration, new ambitions were stirring in her. She had conquered one position, she had become indispensable to Sir William Hamilton, who had told his remonstrating niece, Mrs. Dickenson, that Emma "was necessary to his happiness," as well as "the handsomest, loveliest, cleverest, and best creature in the world." But if she had conquered Sir William's heart it was by the warmth of her own, not by any calculating scheme of self-advantage, for she wrote in 1791 with her usual ardour of conviction, "I confess . . . I doat on him. Nor I never can love any other person but him." Her affections pointed the same way as her dawning ambitions. She had not pressed the point, she had waited through several years, but she had never abandoned her intention to fulfil the statement she made to Greville in 1786, "I will make him marry me."

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE

WHEN the charming and gracious Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll, died at the end of 1790, Emma had many reasons for sadness. She wrote to Greville, "You may think of my afflictions, when I heard of the Duchess of Argyll's death. I never had such a friend as her, and that you will know, when I see you and recount to you all the acts of kindness she shewd to me; for they where too good and numerous to describe in a letter. Think then to a heart of sensibility and gratitude, what it must suffer."

By her first marriage the Duchess was related to Sir William Hamilton, and when she came to Naples for her health in 1789, she met Emma, and took an immediate liking to her. She threw the whole weight of her great social influence into the scales on Emma's side, and by so doing easily made Emma's detractors—who were not so conspicuous for virtue as for small-mindedness and backbiting—of very little account. Emma was naturally grateful to the great lady and generous woman who had understood that though

unwedded she was not an abandoned creature—the more grateful as it was no condescending patronage the Duchess of Argyll gave her, but a genuine and affectionate friendship.

The countenance and support of the lovely and irreproachable Duchess were of immense help to Emma at one of the crises of her existence. Sir William Hamilton had not yet come to share her wishes about marriage. "I fear," he wrote, "that her views are beyond what I can bring myself to execute, and that when her hopes on this point are over she will make herself and me unhappy." But he admitted at the same time that "hitherto her conduct is irreproachable."

Still, in spite of her admirable conduct, there was a considerable gulf between Emma's wishes and Sir William's intentions. This gulf the Duchess of Argyll set herself to bridge on Emma's behalf. She urged him to do the right thing and make the woman who had adorned his house for three years his wife. How far she prevailed and turned his mind in the desired direction is shown by a letter written to Greville from Naples in March, 1791, by a certain worldly-wise friend of his named Heneage Legge :—

"Her [Emma's] influence over him exceeds all belief. . . . The language of both parties, who always spoke in the plural number—we, us, and ours—stagger'd me at first, but soon made me determined to speak openly to him on the

subject, when he assur'd me, what I confess I was most happy to hear, that he was not married; but flung out some hints of doing justice to her good behaviour, if his public situation did not forbid him to consider himself an independant man. . . . She gives everybody to understand that he is now going to England to solicit the K.'s consent to marry her. . . . I am confident she will gain her point, against which it is the duty of every friend to strengthen his mind as much as possible; and she will be satisfied with no argument but the King's absolute refusal of his approbation. Her talents and powers of amusing are very wonderful. Her voice is very fine, but she does not sing with great tàste, and Aprili says she has not a good ear; her Attitudes are beyond description beautiful and striking, and I think you will find her figure much improved since you last saw her. *They* say they shall be in London by the latter end of May, that their stay in England will be as short as possible, and that, having settled his affairs, he is determined never to return. She is much visited here by ladies of the highest rank, and many of the *corps diplomatique;* does the honours of his house with great attention and desire to please, but wants a little refinement of manners."

Some parts of this epistle could not have been pleasant reading to the Honourable Charles Greville. In a letter she wrote him about the

London visit a month or two earlier, Emma had not let him into the secret of her hopes of at last obtaining an assured position; she had merely said—

"You need not be affraid for me in England. We come for a short time, and that time must be occupied in business, and to take our last leave. I don't wish to attract notice. I wish to be an example of good conduct, and to show the world that a pretty woman is not allways a fool. All my ambition to make Sir William happy, and you will see he is so. . . . You can't think 2 people, that as lived five years with all the domestick happiness that's possible can separate, and those 2 persons, that knows no other comfort but in each other's comppny, which is the case I assure you with ous."

By the summer of 1791 Charles Greville had the pleasure of seeing with his own eyes the result of his handiwork and the imminent upset of his cold schemes for his own welfare. Sir William Hamilton and Emma were in London —Emma more beautiful than ever, more assured, more radiant, more accomplished, but not a whit less warm-hearted and impulsive. Of her meeting with the man who had betrayed her trust in him there is no record. But her faithfulness to old friends is shown by the way in which she hastened to cheer Romney with a sight of his "divine lady." On a morning of June she once

more betook herself to the old studio in Cavendish Square, where she found Romney in a state of dejection and melancholy, which was immediately dispelled by the vision of Emma, fair and kind, once more present to inspire and hearten him. She was "still the same Emma." In spite of her many engagements—for the King's consent had been obtained, and she was to marry Sir William Hamilton before leaving London—she found time to sit to Romney for several pictures, for in the presence of his most exquisite model, Romney's failing powers were reinspired, and he painted once more at his best. In June of this year (1791) he wrote to Hayley—

"At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you, before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life.—I told her you had begun it:—then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being my model."

A week or two later Romney wrote—

"I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William, for two or three weeks. They are very

LADY HAMILTON AND A DOG—"NATURE"

GEORGE ROMNEY

much hurried at present, as everything is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her, and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun, are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery."

Romney's mind was already clouded by illness, and he was morbidly sensitive about Emma—he would weave himself a tragedy from airy nothings. He fancied, on one occasion, that she was cold to him, and was forthwith plunged in despair.

"In my last letter," he tells Hayley on the 8th of August, "I think I informed you that I was going to dine with Sir William and his Lady. In the evening of that day, there were collected several people of fashion to hear her sing. She performed, both in the serious and comic, to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her 'Nina' surpasses everything I ever saw, and I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible, and pathetic. My mind was so much heated that I was for running down to Eartham to fetch you up to see her. But, alas! soon after, I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A

coldness and neglect seemed to have taken the place of her repeated declarations of regard for me. They have left town to make many visits in the country. I expect them again the latter end of this week, when my anxiety (for I have suffered much) will be either relieved or increased, as I find her conduct. It is highly probable that none of the pictures will be finished, except I find her more friendly than she appeared to me the last time I saw her."

The wholly imaginary clouds disappeared under the sunshine of Emma's wholesome smiles when she returned to town. Once more to Hayley Romney expressed his content in her, as he had expressed his morbid distress—

"When she arrived to sit, she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I began a picture of her, as a present for her mother. I was very successful with it; for it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now indeed, I think, she is cordial with me as ever; and she laments very much that she is to leave England without seeing you. . . . I was afraid I should not have had power to have painted any more from her; but since she has assumed her former kindness, my health and spirits are quite recovered. She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility with most astonishing powers; she is the talk of the whole town, and

really surpasses everything both in singing and acting that ever appeared. Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a year, and two benefits, if she would engage with him, on which Sir William said pleasantly that he had engaged her for life."

This somewhat trivial little episode of an imaginary coldness has been given space because it shows how much Emma was to Romney, how she had the power not only to inspire his genius, but also to cheer his shrinking, sensitive heart. The summer spent in London in 1791, just before her marriage, was the last time the two met—the two who are perpetually associated so long as canvas and colours last. Romney's brush has made Emma immortal as the very type and perfection of English beauty—a type that in its freshness and bloom is the very flower of our English soil and climate, our rains and mists and gentle sun.

The last picture Romney painted of her is that known as the "Ambassadress," and she gave him a sitting for this on the very day of her wedding. It is the artist's farewell picture, and one of his finest. Here is no wild and gay Bacchante with hair streaming to the wind, no wide-eyed and doom-speaking Cassandra, but Emma herself, sweet and more grave than usual, dressed for travelling, and wearing one of the famous blue hats. She looks in this picture like

a woman who has weighed some of the chances of life, and has the ambition to play a larger and more serious part than she had hitherto attempted. Vesuvius smokes in the background, typical of the Italy to which she is returning and of the stormy happenings into which a few years will plunge her.

Before Romney passes entirely out of her life it is necessary to quote the letter she wrote him after reaching Caserta, on the 20th of December, 1791. It closes that chapter of her existence and turns down the page.

"My dear Friend,—I have the pleasure to inform you we arrived safe at Naples. I have been receved with open arms by all the Neapolitans of both sexes, by all the foreigners of every distinction. I have been presented to the Queen of Naples by her own desire. She as shown me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions. In short, I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope he will have no corse to repent of what he as done; for I feel so gratefull to him, that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this? You know me enough. You was the first dear friend I opend my heart to. You ought to know me, for you have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days. . . . How

gratefull then do I feel to my dear, dear husband, that as restored peace to my mind, that as given me honors, rank, and what is more, innocence and happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear sir, my friend, my more than father. Believe me, I am still that same Emma you knew me. If I could forget for a moment what I was, I ought to suffer. Command me in anything I can do for you here; believe me, I shall have a real pleasure. Come to Naples, and I will be your model:—anything to induce you to come, that I may have an oppertunity to shew you my gratitude to you. Take care of your health for all our sakes. How does the pictures go on? Has the Prince been to you? Write to me. I am interested in all that concerns you. God bless you, my dear Friend. I spoke to Lady Southerland about you; she loves you dearly. Give my love to Mr. Hayley. Tell him I shall be glad to see him at Naples.

"As you was so good to say you would give me the little picture with the black hat, I wish you would . . . give it to Mr. Duten. I have a great regard for him. He took a deal of pains and trouble for me; and I could not do him a greater favour than to give him my picture. Do, my dear friend, do me that pleasure; and, if their is anything from Naples, command me.

"We have a many English at Naples as Ladys Malmsbury, Malden, Plymouth, Carneigee,

Wright, etc. They are very kind and attentive to me. They all make it a point to be remarkably cevil to me. You will be happy at this, as you know what prudes our Ladys are. Tell Hayly I am allways reading his 'Triumphs of Temper;' it was that made me Lady H., for God knows I had for 5 years enough to try my temper, and I am affraid if it had not been for the good example Serena taught me, my girdle wou'd have burst, and if it had I had been undone; for Sir W. minds more temper than beauty. He therefore wishes Mr. Hayley wou'd come, that he might thank him for his sweet-tempered wife. I swear to you, I have never been out of humour since the 6th of last September. God bless you. Yours. E. HAMILTON"

Romney replied to this warm and affectionate epistle, telling her how he rejoiced in her happiness, and praying, "May God grant it may remain so to the end of your days." And with that fatherly wish—which greater causes than either he or Emma foresaw were destined to bring to nought — Romney passes out of the story of Emma Hamilton.

Emma's marriage, which was destined to have such important consequences, has been somewhat hurried over, and it is necessary to go back a step and give some further details. In

LADY HAMILTON AS EMMA

FROM A DRAWING BY SIR T. LAWRENCE

the month before her marriage Emma and Sir William Hamilton spent some time in visiting at country houses, glad to get out of town during an unusually hot August. Among other places, they went to Fonthill Abbey, where Emma's somewhat exuberant taste was delighted by the bizarre glories of "Vathek" Beckford's palatial residence. Nearly ten years later she and Sir William were to visit Fonthill again, having Nelson with them.

Emma was destined to play many parts, but she only played that of a bride on one occasion. Her wedding-day was the 6th of September, 1791, and she was married at Marylebone Church, in the presence of Lord Abercorn and the Mr. Dutens to whom she refers in her letter to Romney. It was a very happy Emma who turned away from the church door with her hand on Sir William's arm. Now she could look the world in the face without either shrinking or defiance. She rested content in the thought of the name and the position her "dear, dear husband" had given her, and probably considered that her adventures and her ambitions were ended—whereas, in reality, they were only dawning upon the horizon of her consciousness.

As for Sir William Hamilton, no doubt he too was happy in an approving conscience and the highly respectable ending of a doubtful adventure. He was certainly proud of the radiant and

lovely woman at his side whom he believed—how mistakenly the future was to prove—he had "engaged for life."

Horace Walpole's comment on the marriage was, "So Sir William has married his gallery of statues!" But Emma was very little of a statue at heart—had she been a little colder she would have remained Sir William's "for life," and Nelson's glory would have had no single stain upon it.

CHAPTER VII

THE QUEEN'S COMRADE

ON their return to Naples, Sir William and Lady Hamilton passed through Paris, where they were received by Marie Antoinette, the sister of the Queen of Naples. The coming doom was already darkening round the fair head of the French Queen, and there can be little doubt that she took the opportunity of their visit to send some communication to her sister of Naples by the hand of the British Ambassador. Lady Hamilton, who was beginning to thrill to the excitement of the European situation, and who always tended to exaggerate her part in events, declared, many years later, that she brought Marie Antoinette's *last* letter to the Queen of Naples.

The unhappy Queen of France has become one of the heroines of history because of the unenviable greatness and the tragic fall that fate and circumstance thrust upon her. But her sister, Maria Carolina, though less known to fame, as playing her part upon a smaller stage,

was in reality far more richly endowed by nature —she had greater beauty, infinitely more brain power, and a considerable share of the forcefulness, capacity, and statecraft of her mother, Maria Theresa. Her King and consort, Ferdinand, was the son of Charles III. of Spain, and a typical Bourbon in his extravagant passion for the chase. He cared little for the dignities and the responsibilities of his position—the fate of dynasties and the internal condition of his country were matters that he was generally content to leave to his clever wife, while he pursued the noble boar at Persano. On the whole, it was fortunate that his tastes turned to sport instead of government, for on the rare occasions when he remembered his duty as a monarch, he showed himself to be of a bullying, obstructive disposition. Beckford called him "a lobster crushed by his shell." His heavy good humour, on which the Queen played, enabled her to be the effectual ruler of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; but occasionally his Spanish tendencies would bestir themselves in his slow mind, and with characteristic delicacy and chivalry he would call his wife the "Austrian hen." The Bourbon in him, the Hapsburg in her, were continually at war; but the advantages were with the alert and determined Queen, for her Bourbon husband was so much occupied with sport and his own forms of enjoyment that he never really mobilized his forces. General Pepé,

in his "Memoirs," said of him, "He was both by nature and education weak, strongly addicted to pleasure, and utterly incapable of opposing himself to the strong mind of the young queen, who soon discovered the character of her husband." Sir John Acton, that curious, cautious, capable, wooden-natured Englishman who played such a variety of parts at the Neapolitan Court, from Admiral of the Neapolitan Fleet (such as it was) to Field-Marshal and Minister of Finance, summed up the King by saying that he was a good sort of man because nature had not endowed him with the faculties necessary for the making of a bad man.

The outbreak of the Revolution in France was watched with great uneasiness and distress of mind by the Queen of Naples, not only because of the threatening danger to her sister and Louis XVI., but also because she saw it as the beginning of a tempest that might soon sweep through Europe to the shores of Italy. "The French have shown themselves," said Burke, "the ablest architects of ruin who have hitherto existed in the world. In a short space of time they have pulled to the ground their army, their navy, their commerce, their arts, and their manufactures." And it was as "architects of ruin" that Maria Carolina regarded all Jacobins, whether French or Neapolitan.

With France in ruins and dishevelment, with

Europe bewildered, with a pro-Spanish husband, the Queen saw herself and her schemes in sore need of support. Her hopes turned towards the England of Pitt—the great Minister who stood out unmoved and calm and obstinately sanguine amid the growing storm. She took the English Acton for her counsellor, she cultivated English sympathies and English good will. She had always been gracious to the British Ambassador, but when he returned in the autumn of 1791 with his wife, she took the surest way to make him her friend by extending a hand to Emma, whom she had heretofore been unable formally to countenance. "Emma has had a difficult part to act," wrote Sir William Hamilton to Horace Walpole, "and has succeeded wonderfully, having gained, by having no pretensions, the thorough approbation of all the English ladies. The Queen of Naples was very kind to her on our return, and treats her like any other travelling lady of distinction; in short, we are very comfortably situated here."

A little later the Queen was to treat her not as a "travelling lady of distinction," but as a friend and confidant and tool, though Emma herself never realized the latter fact.

But before following the development of Emma's intercourse with the Queen, before taking the plunge into the political affairs in which she was soon involved, it is necessary to devote a

little further space to the domestic side of the unfolding drama, as revealed in the letters of the period. The guillotine was already casting its ghastly shadow athwart the fair fields of France, Napoleon's great wars and England's greater resistance were already rising slowly above the horizon of the future. But still there was sunshine at Naples, *fêtes* and dinners and the social round in which Emma always delighted —particularly now in her new and assured position as wife of the British Ambassador. "We dined yesterday with Sir William and Lady Hamilton," writes Lady Malmesbury. "She really behaves as well as possible, and quite wonderfully, considering her origin and education."

This is not, perhaps, very high praise; but Nelson's friend, Sir Gilbert Elliot, writing in 1796, hardly says as much for her :—

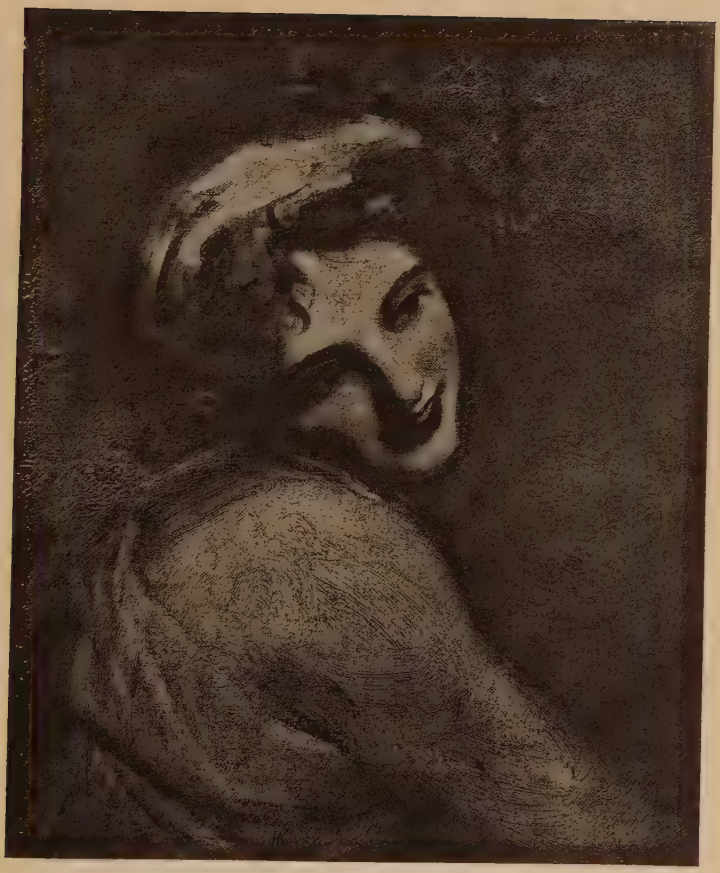
"She is all Nature and yet all Art, that is to say, her manners are perfectly unpolished, of course very easy, though not with the ease of good breeding, but of a barmaid; excessively good humoured, and wishing to please and be admired by all ages and sorts of persons that come in her way; but besides considerable natural understanding, she has acquired, since her marriage, some knowledge of history and of the arts, and one wonders at the application and pains she has taken to make herself what she is. With men her language and conversation

are exaggerations of anything I ever heard anywhere; and I was wonderfully struck with these inveterate remains of her origin, though the impression was very much weakened by seeing the other ladies of Naples."

But when Sir Gilbert Elliot saw the "Attitudes" he was charmed, like all beholders. "We had the 'Attitudes' a night or two ago by candle light," he wrote in the same year. "They come up to my expectations fully, which is saying everything. They set Lady Hamilton in a very different light from any I had seen her in before; nothing about her, neither her conversation, her manners, nor figure, announce the very refined taste which she discovers in this performance, besides the extraordinary talent which is needed for the execution."

Five years earlier than this, the year of Emma's marriage, Lady Malmesbury wrote with enthusiasm: "You never saw anything so charming as Lady Hamilton's 'Attitudes.' The most graceful statues or pictures do not give you an idea of them."

Sir William Hamilton's attachment to his wife was evidently sincere and warm, and when he left her for a short time in January, 1792, to go on one of his sporting expeditions with the King at Persano, he wrote her some charming letters, telling her of all that he did and saw, and giving her much affectionate advice.



LADY HAMILTON AS "A BACCHANTE"

GEORGE ROMNEY

It is somewhat amusing to learn that the obstinacy of the King of Naples sometimes went to the length of spoiling his sport—the most disastrous thing possible, in his own eyes. There were wolves and wild boars in plenty, "but the king would direct how we should beat the wood, and began at the wrong end," says Sir William, "by which the wolves and boars escaped, and we remained without shooting power." He adds with a touch of malice, "The King's face is very long at this moment."

In nearly every letter he declares his attachment to Emma: "I would not be married to any woman, but yourself, on earth, for all the world." And next day, "I am glad all goes on so well. I never doubted your gaining every soul you approach. I am far from being angry at your feeling the loss of me so much! Nay, I am flattered." In the same letter he says, "The cold and fatigue makes my hand something like yours—which, by the bye, you neglect rather too much; but, as what you write is good sense, every body will forgive the scrawl." He tells her a day or two later, "I am glad you have been at the Academy, and in the great world. It is time enough for you to find out, that the only real comfort is to be met with at home; I have been in that secret some time. You are, certainly, the most domestic young woman I know: but you are young, and most beautiful; and it would

not be natural, if you did not like to shew yourself a little in public. The effusion of tenderness, with regard to me, in your letter, is very flattering; I know the value of it, and will do all I can to keep it alive." Again he says, "I assure you, that I shall rejoice when I can embrace you once more. A picture would not content me; your image is more strongly represented on my heart, than any that could be reproduced by human art." In the next day's letter there is an interesting reference, showing how strong and unabated by social success was Lady Hamilton's attachment to her mother: "As to your mother's going with you to the English parties, very well," says Sir William, "but, believe me, it will be best for her, and more to her happiness, to stay at home, than go with you to the Neapolitan parties."

The following day the King killed nineteen boars, two stags, two does, and a porcupine, and "he is happy beyond expression"—a noble pastime, truly, and a most worthy happiness!

Though so much occupied with sport, Sir William had time to say a word about his wife's handwriting, and in one of his letters he turns to her marked deficiencies in spelling: "By the bye, I must tell you, that *accept* and *except* are totally different. You always write, 'I did not except of the invitation;' when, you know, it should be '*accept*.' It is, only, for want of giving

yourself time to think; but, as this error has been repeated, I thought best to tell you of it." Next day he pays her a pretty compliment: "It was not your white and silver, alone, that made you look like an angel, at the Academy. Suppose you had put it on nine parts out of ten of the ladies in company, would any one have appeared angelic? I will allow, however, that a beautiful woman, feeling herself well dressed, will have a sort of confidence, which will add greatly to the lustre of her eye: but take my word, that, for some years to come, the more simply you dress, the more conspicuous will be your beauty; which, according to my idea, is the most perfect I have yet met with, take it all in all, . . . I always rejoice when I find you do not neglect your singing. I am, I own, ambitious of producing something extraordinary in you, and it is nearly done."

But Emma had more solid virtues than her "Attitudes" and her singing. She was a good nurse, as her husband found, when, at the close of 1792, he had the first of those attacks of illness which were to age him so considerably. Emma was distracted with grief and anxiety. She tells Greville that she has been "almost as ill as him with anxiety, aprehension and fatige, the last endead, the least of what I have felt, and I am now doubly repaid by the dayly progress he makes for the better. . . . I need not say to you,

my dear Mr. Greville, what I have suffered. Endead, I was almost distracted from such extreme happiness at once to such misery. . . . What cou'd console me for the loss of such a husband, friend, and protector? For surely no happiness is like ours. We live but for one another. But I was too happy. . . . Every moment I feel what I felt, when I thought I was loseing him for ever."

She tells Greville of the kindness of the English ladies of rank during Sir William's illness, how they sent twice a day to inquire, and offered to come and help in her nursing, while "the King and Queen sent constantly morning and evening the most flattering messages, but all was nothing to me."

Even when barely recovered from the strain of nursing—and she had gone eight days without undressing or sleeping properly—she remembered her old grandmother at home. The oft-quoted appeal to Greville is so characteristic that it must find a place.

"I will trouble you with my own affairs, as you are so good as to interest yourself about me. You must know I send my grandmother every Cristmas twenty pounds, and so I ought. I have 200 a year for nonsense, and it wou'd be hard if I cou'd not give her twenty pounds when she has so often given me her last shilling. As Sir William is ill, I cannot ask him for the

order; but if you will get the twenty pounds and send it to her, you will do me the greatest favor; for if the time passes without hearing from me, she may imagine I have forgot her, and I would not keep her poor old heart in suspense for the world. . . . Cou'd you not write to her a line from me and send to her, and tell her by my order, and she may write to you? Send me her answer. For I cannot divest myself of my original feelings. It will contribute to my happiness, and I am sure you will assist to make me happy. Tell her every year she shal have twenty pound. The fourth of November last I had a dress on that cost twenty-five pounds, as it was Gala at Court; and believe me I felt unhappy all the while I had it on."

But her thoughts were quickly turned to larger events, for at the beginning of the new year, 1793, came the thunderclap of Louis the Sixteenth's execution. The storm-cloud had burst in a flood that was to whelm not only the King and Queen of France, but many of the fairest and bravest of their subjects; and when the guillotine ceased its work, up rose a new curse to France in the person of Napoleon, whose marvellous military genius and over-reaching ambition plunged Europe into one of the titanic struggles of history—a struggle in which nation battled against nation, madly,

blindly, scarce seeing the cause of their strife and fury through the sword-blows and the deafening roar of the cannon, scarce realizing why to one side fell the dust of defeat, to the other the fumes of unjustifiable conquest. Dumb armies were driven across Europe by one man's will, and left like stubble upon the fields of battle, while their idolized "little Corporal"—he who had inspired them with that love of "la Gloire," which to him meant the purple of power, and to them the crimson of wounds and death's pale ermine—mounted the steps of the throne which he had built upon the ruins of Republican sentiment.

Even before the beginning of the Great War which had its root in the Revolution, the Queen of Naples had turned her eyes to England. She saw that from the Mistress of the Seas must come her help against the Terror that was spreading through France. When Lady Hamilton, on hearing that Louis the Sixteenth had fallen, expressed her horror at "the execrable deed the infamous French have committed," Maria Carolina replied in terms significant of her hopes. "I send you," she wrote, enclosing with her letter a little picture of the Dauphine, "the portrait of that innocent child who implores assistance, vengeance, or, if he is also sacrificed, his ashes united to those of his parents cry to the Eternal for speedy retribution; I

rely the most on your generous nation to accomplish it."

From this time onward the Queen of Naples made much of Lady Hamilton, and Emma's impulsive nature responded with the most generous enthusiasm. She had the gift of hero-worship in an almost extravagant degree, and for many years Maria Carolina occupied the pedestal of her admiration. The Queen's hatreds were her hatreds, and there is no doubt that Emma loved her own country more because the Queen of Naples looked towards it with anxious hope. With her usual extravagance and lack of balance, Lady Hamilton would have placed all the resources of England at the disposal of the Queen of Naples, had it been in her power to do so, and she certainly did much in later years to inspire Nelson with something of the same feeling—in spite of his insight, his experience, his passionate patriotism, and his fervent hatred of the foreigner.

The growth of the Queen's intimacy with Emma is shown in a letter she wrote to Greville on the second of June, 1793, from Caserta, where, "for political reasons," she and Sir William had been living for eight months—the "political reasons" being that they might be in constant communication with the Queen. She tells Greville that they dine frequently with the royal family, as they have "done Sir William and me

the honner to invite us very, very often . . . the reason why we stay now here is, I have promised the Queen to remain as long as she does, which will be tell the tenth of July. In the evening I go to her, and we are *tête-à-tête* 2 or 3 hours. Sometimes we sing. Yesterday the King and me sang duetts 3 hours. It was but bad, *as he sings like a King*." She is very proud of her tactful behaviour towards Maria Carolina: "Nor do I abuse of Her Majesty's goodness." She describes her conduct when an official drawing-room was held:—

"I had been with the Queen the night before alone *en famille* laughing and singing, etc., etc., but at the drawing-room I kept my distance, and payd the Queen as much respect as tho' I had never seen her before, which pleased her very much. But she shewd me great distinction that night, and told me several times how she admired my good conduct. . . . The English garden is going on very fast. The King and Queen go there every day. Sir William and me are there every morning at seven a clock, sometimes dine there and allways drink tea there. In short it is Sir William's favourite child, and booth him and me are now studying botany, but not to make ourselves pedantical prigs and shew our learning like some of our travelling neighbours, but for our own pleasure."

Over a year later, Lady Hamilton's enthu-

AS "EUPHROSYNE"

GEORGE ROMNEY

siasm for the Queen of Naples was still growing. She wrote to the same correspondent in December, 1794—

"No person can be so charming as the Queen. She is everything one can wish,—the best mother, wife, and friend in the world. I live constantly with her, and have done intimately so for 2 years, and I never have in all that time seen anything but goodness and sincerity in her, and, if ever you hear any lyes about her, contradict them, and if you should see a cursed book written by a vile french dog with her character in it, don't believe one word. She lent it me last night, and I have by reading the infamous calumny put myself quite out of humour, that so good and virtus a princess shou'd be so infamously described."

In a still later letter, when Sir William had been down again with another of his now frequent attacks of bilious fever, Emma wrote to Greville—

"My ever dear Queen as been like a mother to me, since Sir William as been ill. She writes to me four or five times a day, and offerd to come and assist me. This is friendship. . . . Send me some news, political and private; for, against my will, *owing to my situation here*, I am got into politicks, and I wish to have news for our dear much-loved Queen, whom I adore. Nor can I live without her, for she is to me . . . friend and

everything. If you cou'd know her as I do, how you wou'd adore her! For she is the first woman in the world; her talents are superior to every woman's in the world; and her heart is most excellent and strictly good and upright. But you'l say it is because we are such friends, that I am partial; but ask anybody that knows her. She loves England and is attached to our Ministry, and wishes the continuation of the war as the only means to ruin that abominable French council."

But Lady Hamilton's "much-loved Queen" did not make herself thus friendly and gracious to the British Ambassador's wife simply for the sake of winning her affection. There can be little doubt that she found Emma's natural ardour and hearty simplicity refreshing in the strained and artificial atmosphere of her Court. There can be little doubt, also, that as time went on she came to lean considerably on Emma's devotion and capacity for dealing with men and events. But in the year 1793, when the intimacy between the two began, it was not so much an inclination for Lady Hamilton's society made the Queen so kind, but the state of her own kingdom and of Europe in general. She had, it will be remembered, expressed her hope in the efforts of the "generous nation" for avenging the death of Louis XVI. It was the hope of William Pitt, on the other hand, to save England from being drawn into

the Continental cataclysm. He did all that was humanly possible, lonely and unsupported though he was, to save his country from the war to which he saw her plunging headlong. As J. R. Green says: "No hour of Pitt's life is so great as the hour when he stood alone in England, and refused to bow to the growing cry of the nation for war." But between the intense feeling of the English people, especially after the execution of Marie Antoinette, on the one hand, and the outrageous acts of the French on the other, the position was not tenable. France was determined on war; in Danton's violent words: "The coalized Kings threaten us; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King."

Liberty—the new liberty which was to light the dark old world—as proclaimed by the fresh risen despots of France, was a liberty to commit crime without punishment, to impose arbitrary "systems" upon independent countries. "The general interest of restoring peace to Europe," said these new apostles of freedom and the brotherhood of mankind, "can be obtained only by the annihilation of the despots and their satellites. All conspires in inducing us to treat such a people according to the rigour of war and conquest."

In the name of Liberty, and Equality, and Fraternity, it was

"Cry—Havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."

On the shores of the Mediterranean the sister of the murdered queen, the high-hearted daughter of Maria Theresa, watched these events with an anguish and rage that may be imagined. Fear and revenge both drove her the same road. In a kind of paroxysm she herself became a tyrant in her fierce suppression of the disaffected and of those who had any traffickings with the French agents and spies who honeycombed her kingdom. By a secret tribunal and "Junta" she dealt out deportation and proscription. She dismissed the Jacobin representative of France, Citizen Mackau; but when a French squadron under La Touche Tréville dropped anchor in Naples Bay, and insisted that the minister should be taken back, she had perforce to submit under the threat of his guns, though her fury against France was naturally not lessened by this episode. The Kingdom of Naples was forced to retire from the first Coalition against the French, for, till England took part in the war, the French fleet was unchecked in the Mediterranean. But when Lord Hood and his ships came upon the scene, when Toulon was occupied by the British, "Naples," says Mr. David Hannay, "plucked up heart of grace to take part against France. Her ships cruised with the English, and her soldiers ran away at Toulon." But Maria Carolina was not responsible for the poor stuff her soldiers were made of, and her own passion against the French

was undiminished. Unpopular with her people because of her anti-Jacobin severities—though the Lazzaroni remained faithful to the hearty, maccaroni-eating, coarse-grained King they liked and understood—she yet persisted in her efforts to oppose France, to root out the sans-culottes, whether French or Neapolitan, and to gain the good will and support of England — the one country that stood on a foundation of rock, while the rest of Europe seemed to quake on quagmires. Her own personal temper is shown by the way Robespierre, the "sea-green, incorruptible," haunted her. Of every aristocrat who showed symptoms of rebellion she cried with all the fury of fear, "We will not give him time to become a Robespierre."

Into this whirlpool Emma Hamilton plunged with all her light-hearted love of excitement. She might tell Greville that against her will she had "got into politicks," but in reality she rejoiced in the stir and movement, the thrill of big events, and her natural courage was exalted by the suggestion of danger. To her a world without excitement was indeed "flat, stale, unprofitable."

CHAPTER VIII

ENTER NELSON

ON the 10th of September, 1793, Nelson, in the sixty-four-gun ship *Agamemnon*, sailed into the Bay of Naples bearing great tidings. He had left the blockade before Toulon on the very eve of the surrender of the French arsenal and dockyard. Lord Hood had sent him to Naples to seek a reinforcement of troops to garrison and hold it. He left with a certain regret at the crowning moment of the blockade, which had proved not a blockade, but a conquest. "I should have liked," he told his wife, "to have stayed one day longer with the fleet, when they entered the harbour, but service could not be neglected for any private gratification."

Nelson had come from a station where he and his ship's company had to subsist on a diet of "honour and salt beef." At Naples he was received not only with honour, but with feasting and rejoicing. The news he brought, the sight of an English sixty-four, lifted the Neapolitan Court from a state of fear and indecision to one

of joyous excitement. Nelson, as the emissary of England and the inveterate foe of the French, was called the "Saviour of Italy;" Maria Carolina was ardent in her praises. Troops were promised—though there was no guarantee against them "running away!" In the satisfaction of the moment the Neapolitan Prime Minister called Captain Nelson "Admiral"—not a very serious mistake, for it was but anticipating events.

Nelson, at this time, was close upon thirty-five years old. His face, though worn by sea-weather, was not yet lined and drawn by the griefs and strain and glorious hardships of his later years. As yet he bore no scars of battle upon him, both the eye and the arm which he lost in the service of his country were still his. There is a portrait of him, painted thirteen years earlier when he was a young captain of twenty-two, which gives some idea of his appearance at this time, if allowance is made for the greater maturity and assurance of bearing which something over a decade had brought him. Rigaud painted the picture, and he stands, a slender determined figure, with both hands on his sword-hilt, his wide cocked hat worn low on his brows, his steady level eyes looking out with some marked quality of searchingness, the mobile mouth sweet in expression, but already tending towards that sensitive, half-pouting look so characteristic in later years.

Even at twenty-two Captain Nelson had the

air and bearing of a man who was assured of himself, who knew his own qualities and feared nothing destiny might bring, save the lack of opportunity. Since that portrait was painted, and up to the year of his coming to Naples, destiny had not been particularly lavish. He had but escaped from five years of half-pay—Admiralty coldness and deafness to his appeals for a ship had lasted so long that when, on the outbreak of war in 1793, My Lords suddenly smiled upon him he declared himself as much surprised as when they frowned.

But now war had come, the map of his destiny was unrolled. The first rays of fame had not yet touched him, though his comrades and superiors in the service were already beginning to realize that he was a man of no common stuff. Unimpressive though he was in outward aspect, there was something arresting in his personality and bearing. His qualities instantly struck Sir William Hamilton, who determined to entertain him at his own house, and returning to his wife told her, "The captain I am about to introduce to you is a little man and far from handsome, but he will live to be a great man. I know it from the talk I have had with him."

And so Nelson and Lady Hamilton met for the first time. Nelson was too much taken up with war and affairs to spare any special thought to the British Ambassador's wife. He comments

LADY HAMILTON AS EMMA

GEORGE ROMNEY

on her in a cool and detached manner to his wife: "She is a young woman of amiable manners, and who does honour to the station to which she is raised." He mentions that she has been "wonderfully good and kind" to his stepson, Josiah Nisbet. Nothing more.

In return for the hospitality and kindness he had received during his visit, Nelson purposed to give a luncheon party on board the *Agamemnon* to the King, the Queen, the British Ambassador and his "amiable" wife, Sir John Acton, and the Neapolitan Ministers. The date of this festivity was the 24th of September. When the morning came all was in readiness, the *Agamemnon* gay with decorations, and the distinguished guests awaiting the arrival of the Sicilian sovereigns. But before the King appeared, came a messenger with an express for Nelson that a French man-of-war and three sail under convoy had anchored off Sardinia. Nelson did not hesitate. "Unfit as my ship was," he wrote, "I had nothing left for the honour of our country but to sail, which I did in two hours afterwards. It was necessary to show them what an English man-of-war would do."

Thus leaving both royalties and Emma Hamilton without a further thought, Nelson, in the *Agamemnon*, went stretching down the coast in pursuit of his duty and the French—he was apt to find the two together. When he was

commissioning the *Agamemnon* at the beginning of the war, he told one of his midshipmen that the whole of his duty was to obey orders, honour the King, and "hate a Frenchman as you do the devil."

And so Nelson left Naples, to return no more for five years—five years into which he crowded much of service and suffering, sieges on shore and fightings at sea. He lost an eye at Calvi, an arm at Teneriffe; he wore out of the line at the Battle of St. Vincent and turned an indecisive engagement into a victory; he electrified the fleet with his "Patent Bridge for Boarding First-Rates;" and he won the Battle of the Nile—all this before he set his foot again in Naples.

After seeing and talking with Nelson, who in later years so signally embodied the might of England at sea to all the world, Maria Carolina was further strengthened in her hopes of Great Britain. By revolutions at home and the spreading terror abroad, she was driven more and more to look towards the Mistress of the Seas. Only by sea-power could the French be prevented from reaping the fruit of the dissensions sown with such assiduity by revolutionary agents in Naples. Maria Carolina's natural character, though despotic, was enlightened. In earlier years, before the coming of the revolutionary troubles, she had done much for learning and the arts, while

she was anxious to encourage the intellectual advancement of women. But when the students she had aided turned Jacobin, when her subjects hailed as God-sent the Revolution which had murdered her sister and her sister's husband, the Queen of Naples became almost distraught with anger. Clemency was out of court; ringleaders were executed without mercy, sometimes even being denied the final rites of their religion; Jacobins were thrown into prison and only released four years later under the pressure of outside events. Under the dictatorship of one of her ministers, the "white terror of Naples" became a word in the mouths of the people. "Death to the French" was a text for the churches.

Emma Hamilton saw all events at this time with the eyes of her "adored Queen." She was always a hot partisan, and though naturally tender-hearted could hardly bring herself to look upon the Jacobins as human beings. Four years later, a month or so before the Battle of the Nile, she wrote to Nelson with a fury which was really reflected from the Queen—

"The Jacobins have all been lately declared innocent after suffering four years imprisonment; and, I know, they all deserved to be hanged long ago; and, since Garrat has been here, and through his insolent letters to Gallo, these pretty gentlemen, that had planned the death

of their Majesties, are to be let out on society again."

The course of affairs in Europe drew the Queen still closer to Lady Hamilton in the five years which elapsed from Nelson's first visit to Naples till his return as the Hero of the Nile. Those five years saw many changes and shiftings of the European situation. The blows struck by France seemed to paralyze the Coalition, which gradually faltered and fell in pieces. Holland was forcibly wrested from the confederacy. Prussia and Sweden retired in the spring of 1795; Spain followed their example a few months later. It was not only the French armies but also mutual jealousies dissolved that watchful league against France which mutual interests had created. Europe was to pay dear for her lack of cohesion against the common enemy. Napoleon's star was rising over the Continent he was to turn into one vast battlefield—a star crimson as that of Mars. His Italian campaign visibly shook the Kingdom of Naples, while the tramp of his victorious armies was a sound of imminent doom and disruption to the Queen, who saw herself without soldiers and without a navy whereby to oppose this new Alexander "late upspröng;" with a populace, too, impregnated with revolutionary ideas, and as threatening as Vesuvius on the eve of eruption. Austria and England were her hope; but by the treaty

signed in October, 1797, at Campo Formio, she saw Austria overcome. There remained only England.

The pressure of war was heavy on England at this time. The state of affairs, the threatening dangers near at home, compelled her to withdraw her fleets from the Mediterranean. This evacuation filled the Queen of Naples with despair, for when the ships of England were hull down below the horizon on the Atlantic side of the gateway of Gibraltar, she saw herself and her kingdom abandoned to France the enemy. Nelson himself, like most of the naval officers of the period, was indignant at removing the white ensign from any sea where it had braved "the battle and the breeze." "I lament our present orders in sackcloth and ashes," he said, "so dishonourable to the dignity of England, whose fleets are equal to meet the world in arms." Writing from Bastia in December, 1796, he says: "Till this time it has been usual for the allies of England to fall from her, but till now she never was known to desert her friends whilst she had the power of supporting them."

A proud and justifiable boast. But consider the situation of England when the British fleets were withdrawn from the Mediterranean. The French had tried an invasion of Ireland, which had failed; but a junction of the French, Dutch, and Spanish fleets was planned, from which great

events were expected—this threatening danger was only averted by the defeat of the Spanish contingent off St. Vincent on St. Valentine's Day, 1797.

Emma Hamilton persuaded herself—and later persuaded Nelson—that she had a direct share in making this victory of Sir John Jervis's possible, owing to the warning of Spain's defection from the Coalition in 1795, and alliance with France in 1796, which the British Ambassador at Naples was enabled to transmit to his own Government at home, through his wife's influence and intimacy with the Queen of Naples. It was a large claim for Lady Hamilton to make, and though early knowledge of Spain's intentions was very valuable, even Nelson did not consider that her information, though forming part of her "eminent services" to her country, led directly to Jervis's battle with the Spanish fleet.

At this time there were two influences pulling in different directions at the Court of Naples. Ferdinand's brother, King Charles of Spain, was doing all that in him lay to coax and bully the little Kingdom of the Two Sicilies into the arms of France. Ferdinand himself, with his pro-Spanish tendencies and a certain obstinate satisfaction in directing the affairs of his kingdom in his own way, and against the known wishes of his Austrian wife, was hesitating over the question. Naturally he was anxious to keep the

Spanish correspondence from the eyes of the Queen, of Acton, and of Sir William Hamilton. But the astute Maria Carolina was not so much in the dark as he imagined: she had her own methods and her own channels both of information and communication. The principal latter channel was Lady Hamilton. The habit she had fallen into of writing frequently to the British Ambassador's wife on matters of no moment, now proved of extreme value when she was dealing with matters of very considerable moment. It would not have been possible for her to confer constantly with Sir William Hamilton without arousing conjecture and suspicion. But Lady Hamilton was different. All the Court knew of her attachment to the beautiful English woman—if letters were constant was it not the way of women, even of Queens, to write much about trifles? Here is one of Maria Carolina's simple little notes, written in April, 1795—

"My very dear Lady,—My head is so confused, and my soul so shaken, that I know not what to do. I hope to see you to-morrow morning about ten o'clock. I send you a letter in cypher, come from Spain, from Galatone, which must be returned before twenty-four hours, in order that the King may find it again. There [are] some facts very interesting for the English Government, which I wish to communicate to them, to

shew my attachment to them, and the confidence I feel in the worthy Chevalier, whom I only beg not to compromise me."

The game was already begun. Ferdinand believed that he was successfully deceiving his clever Queen, while she did not scruple to abstract his secret documents and hand them, through Emma, to the British Ambassador to be forwarded to London. Lady Hamilton played a valuable part in this diplomatic business; but, as she herself failed to see, it was a subordinate part. She copied, she translated, she transmitted; but it is impossible to believe that Maria Carolina would not have done exactly the same, though with more difficulty, had Lady Hamilton been non-existent. The Queen of Naples was not a woman to be turned from her aim by small obstacles; the absence or presence of the ardent and accommodating Lady Hamilton was not a vital matter to her political schemes, which were based on self-interest, hatred of the French, and the ambition natural to the daughter of Maria Theresa. She had a real liking and admiration for Emma, it is true: if Queens have friends she regarded Emma as one, but though friend, she was tool as well. Emma was peculiarly fitted to be the tool of ambition, for where her affections were engaged—especially where she could flatter herself that she was playing a brilliant and

exciting part in the full glare of the historic searchlight—she never stopped to ask for secret and subtle motions, to question whether she was being used. The mental attitude of the fly on the wheel, pleased at the dust he thought he was raising, is somewhat typically her own.

But once admitting that Lady Hamilton was not so paramount and so indispensable as she tended to imagine, the fact remains that she was in the very thick of political events of great importance to England and to Europe. Among the Morrison Papers is a copy in Italian of the King of Spain's letter to his brother Ferdinand, transcribed by Lady Hamilton and endorsed in Sir William Hamilton's handwriting: "Copy of the King of Spain's Letter to the K. of Naples, Augt. 11th, 1795, having made Peace with the French Rep." As the letter is important, it is given nearly in full:—

"In my letter of 2 April I wrote to you that I was thinking of doing what would be possible for me to hasten on a solid and permanent peace which might enable mankind to pause from the horrors of a war so cruel and devastating as the present. The sad experience of three campaigns totally fruitless; the utter ruin of the Jacobins, the sworn foes of God and of all sovereigns, to whose fury has succeeded the moderate system of the actual government of France; the superiority which her arms everywhere maintain; the disunion

and wont of *suite* generally but too much displayed among those powers which at first appeared the most interested in restoring in France good faith, order, worship and the throne; the treaties of peace and amity made by some of them with the Convention; the loss of some fortresses and of a considerable portion of my frontier provinces; and lastly (what weighs with me most of all) the desire of sparing the blood spent as yet so vainly by my faithful people,—these are motives, dear Brother, which have induced me finally to abandon the hostile system which I accurately followed so long as I could employ and uphold my armies with any hope of remedying, by force of arms, the evils of France. But, having clearly discerned that opinion cannot be altered by force, and considering on the other hand that the security and tranquillity of my kingdom are the first of my duties, I have begun to treat with the French for peace, which, though not yet concluded, will I hope not delay long in being settled to the full satisfaction of the two nations, and above all to the advantage of my own, so far as can be hoped from the circumstances, critical enough, in which we find ourselves. Whatever may be the result of the negotiations on foot, you may rest assured that I shall never be forgetful of Italy, and far less of your own states, and that you will always find me ready to obtain for you the same benefit of the peace

"THE SPINSTRESS"

GEORGE ROMNEY

which I so much desire, proportionate to my own, as to which object, I have already made some proposals in your behalf, which I apprehend will be well received. God send that it may be for us a means more to the purpose for sparing the blood of the rest of our ill-fated family than war has hitherto been."

Through the agency of the Queen and of his wife, Sir William Hamilton promptly forwarded the news contained in this interesting document to his own Government in London.

From amity to alliance was not a long step with the King of Spain. The desire of "sparing the blood of his faithful people" was not so strong as his desire to strike at England in union with France. During the spring and summer of 1796 he wrote constantly in a hectoring tone to Ferdinand, and in August of the same year Acton wrote to Sir William Hamilton that "the odd and open threatenings of the King of Spain to his brother do not leave any room to hope for a separation from the French, or change in that Court of their strange and most shameful system."

It is round the King of Spain's letter to the King of Naples, announcing his intention of joining France and making war, that much of the controversy as to Lady Hamilton's services to England at this point of her career centres. Nelson's statement of the matter in the famous

Codicil of Trafalgar Day is clear. "Lady Hamilton," he says, "obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter the Ministry sent out orders to the then Sir John Jervis to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either the arsenals of Spain or her fleets. That neither of these was done is not the fault of Lady Hamilton."

In her Memorial to the King of England many years later, when compelled by her situation to bring her services to the attention of her country, Emma Hamilton recalls to George III. "That it was the good fortune of your Majesty's memorialist, among many inferior services, to acquire the confidential friendship of that great and august Princess, the Queen of Naples, your Majesty's most faithful and ardently attached Ally, at a period of peculiar peril, and when her august Consort . . . was unhappily constrained to profess a neutrality, but little in accordance with the feelings of his own excellent heart. By which means your Majesty's memorialist, among many inferior services, had an opportunity of obtaining, and actually did obtain, the King of Spain's letter to the King of Naples expressive of his intention to declare war against England. This important document, your Majesty's memorialist delivered to her husband, Sir William

Hamilton, who immediately transmitted it to your Majesty's Ministers."

This is a plain and simple statement which few people, considering all the circumstances, would have any difficulty in accepting as the substantial truth. But, unfortunately for herself, Lady Hamilton had a habit of exaggeration and a love of theatrical effect that could not rest content with anything so unadorned. In her Memorial to the Prince Regent, she added picturesque details which have tended to cast doubt on the authenticity of her claims. She refers again to her influence with the Queen of Naples, and goes on: "By unceasing application of that influence, and no less watchfulness to turn it to my country's good, it happened that I discovered a courier had brought the King of Naples a private letter from the King of Spain. I prevailed on the Queen to take it from his pocket unseen. We found it to contain the King of Spain's intention to withdraw from the Coalition, and join the French against England. My husband at that time lay dangerously ill. I prevailed on the Queen to allow my taking a copy, with which I immediately dispatched a messenger to Lord Grenville, taking all the necessary precautions; for his safe arrival then became very difficult, and altogether cost me about £400 paid out of my privy purse."

This Prince Regent Memorial contains several

misstatements and exaggerations, of which the most glaring is that concerning the news of the King of Spain's intention to withdraw from the Coalition and join the French—events which occurred in two separate though succeeding years —being found in the single letter abstracted from Ferdinand's pocket. Emma's statement that she paid £400 out of her privy purse is also of doubtful accuracy, considering that her own yearly allowance was only £200, and she always spent it up to the last penny. But because certain details are demonstrably mistaken, it is not fair to conclude the whole thing a fabrication —especially when dealing with a woman of Lady Hamilton's temperament. Both the Memorials were written many years after the event, and the confusion of two years is not an unnatural error. Her memory might well play her tricks with dates, though not so easily with facts and actual happenings, which have a firmer way of fixing themselves in the mind.

It is hardly necessary to go into minute discussion of this point. The fact remains that a copy of the King of Spain's letter announcing his intention of entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with France—it could not have announced his withdrawal from the Coalition, for that was accomplished already—was obtained by the Queen of Naples and forwarded to England at her desire by Sir William Hamilton. Lady

Hamilton's share in the transaction is not vitally important. Whether or no she suggested taking the letter from the pocket of the unsuspecting King, as she proudly claims, is not a crucial matter. It may be a nice point of honour, but neither Emma nor Maria Carolina were given to sticking at trifles and the glory may fairly be divided between them.

It is sufficient for our purpose that Emma, at the time and years afterwards, believed quite honestly that she had rendered the British Government and Crown a considerable service in this matter, and Nelson believed so too. Writing at this time to Charles Greville, she informed him, with a half-childish exultation and much underlining—

"We have not time to write to you, as we have been 3 days and nights writing to send by this courrier letters of *consequence* for our government. They ought to be gratefull to Sir William and *myself in particular*, as my situation at this Court is very *extraordinary*, and what no person [h]as as yet arrived at; but one [h]as no thanks, and I am allmost sick of grandeur. We are tired to death with anxiety, and God knows were we shall soon be, and what will become of us, if things go on as they do now."

It is a quaint little sidelight on her truly feminine character that though "allmost sick of grandeur," a few lines further on, in the same

letter, she begs Greville to "send me by the bearer a Dunstable hat, and some ribbands, or what you think will be acceptable."

Identifying herself with the Queen of Naples and all her interests as she did, it was not surprising that Emma wrote, "God knows were we shall soon be, and what will become of us, if things go on as they do now." The weakness of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was apparent, and France took advantage of it to exact a compact at the close of 1796, by which the kingdom was bound to the crippling condition of not admitting more than four vessels of the Allies at one time to any Neapolitan or Sicilian port. But if Naples was thus compelled into a distasteful neutrality, the Queen took care to ignore both the letter and the spirit of this neutrality wherever possible. Forced by her weakness to be secret, Maria Carolina lost no opportunity of in secret defying France.

In the prevailing gloom and distress Nelson's name and deeds shone out with the promise of a better time, when French ships should not exult unchecked in the Mediterranean, nor French armies trample Italy. Even before the Battle of St. Vincent Nelson's name was beginning to acquire a peculiar worth and significance. He wrote to his wife in 1796: "A person sent me a letter, and directed as follows: 'Horatio Nelson, Genoa.' On being asked how he could direct in

such a manner, his answer, in a large party, was, 'Sir, there is but one Horatio Nelson in the world.' I am known throughout Italy, not a Kingdom, or State, where my name will be forgotten."

It is a pity the name of the "person" who wrote that magnificently simple address has not been preserved. He showed a remarkable foresight.

The Hamiltons kept in touch with Nelson from the time of his short visit to Naples, in 1793, till they met again after the Nile. Sir William wrote to him early in 1796: "Lady Hamilton and I admire your constancy, and hope the severe service you have undergone will be handsomely rewarded."

There is no record and no reason to suppose that Nelson personally had made any special impression on Lady Hamilton during their brief meeting. But after St. Valentine's Day of 1797, Nelson became a name to conjure with, and we may be sure that Emma used it often to cheer the desponding Queen—promising, with her usual extravagant ardour, all that Nelson and England should do for her Sicilian Majesty. There is little doubt, also, that as she saw Nelson's star beginning its brilliant ascent towards the zenith, where it has shone ever since, she naturally tended to gravitate towards it—urged alike by her theatrical passion for *eclât* and her nobler love for great and glorious deeds. Nelson's

doings at St. Vincent echoed not only through the Navy, but through Europe. He was made a Rear-Admiral of the Blue and a Knight of the Bath. His good old father, the Reverend Edmund Nelson, wrote to his son: "Joy sparkles in every eye, and desponding Britain draws back her sable veil, and smiles. It gives me inward satisfaction to know, that the laurels you have wreathed sprung from those principles and religious truths which alone constitute the Hero."

Then came the disastrous attack on Teneriffe, where Nelson lost his right arm, and returned to England in despair, writing to Lord St. Vincent before leaving, "I am become a burthen to my friends and useless to my country. When I leave your command, I become dead to the world; I go hence and am no more seen."

But destiny did not intend that Nelson should be "no more seen." By the December of 1797 he was restored to health, after a period of grievous suffering from his badly amputated arm. He had discovered that his country had need of him, even though he was an admiral with only one arm and one eye. In the fulness of his heart he sent to the vicar of St. George's, Hanover Square, on the 8th of December, a notice to be used on the following Sunday, "An officer desires to return thanks to Almighty God for his perfect recovery from a severe wound, and also for the many mercies bestowed upon him."

And so with recovery of health and hopes, with the promise of a ship—it was to have been the *Foudroyant*, then just ready for launching—opened the year of the Nile. Inevitable delays occurred before Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson could join his Commander-in-Chief. The fine 80-gun *Foudroyant* was, after all, not ready so soon as expected, so Nelson took instead the 74-gun *Vanguard*, and on the last day of April, 1798, joined Earl St. Vincent off Cadiz. On the 8th of May Nelson sailed from Gibraltar with a small squadron, two sail-of-the-line—besides the *Vanguard*—three frigates and a sloop. His object was to observe the French preparations at Toulon, and discover, if possible, the destination of the large force assembling there. And so the British flag once more entered the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile at Naples things were pretty bad. The Prime Minister, Sir John Acton, was despondent. It was useless, as he assured Sir Gilbert Elliot, for the Italians to arm themselves if they were not aided from the outside, while as for the Neapolitan Navy, their "headshipman had lost his head, if ever he had any." The meaning is plain, though the English is odd. The British Navy was the only hope, for Austria was a broken reed. Acton urged Sir William Hamilton to inform Lord St. Vincent of their plight and condition. "Their majesties,"

he says, "observe the critical moment for all Europe, and the threatens of an invasion even in England. They are perfectly convinced of the generous and extensive exertions of the British nation at this moment, but a diversion in these points might operate advantage for the common war. Will England see all Italy, and even the Two Sicilies, in the French hands with indifference?"

But Sir William Hamilton dared not promise much. "We cannot, however," he says, with diplomatic caution, "avoid to expose that His Sicilian Majesty confides too much in His Britannic Majesty's Ministry's help."

It is obvious that Emma had nothing to do with this cold statement—that was not the sort of consolation she was offering the Queen! And with characteristic energy she did more than merely offer consolation. She wrote to Earl St. Vincent, appealing strongly to his aid and protection for the distressed Maria Carolina. St. Vincent, who called Lady Hamilton the "Patroness of the Navy," and whose courtesy to women was in marked contrast to his severity as a sea-officer, replied as follows:—

"The picture you have drawn of the lovely Queen of Naples and the Royal Family would rouse the indignation of the most unfeeling of the creation at the infernal design of those devils who, for the scourge of the human race, govern

France. I am bound by my oath of chivalry to protect all who are persecuted and distressed, and I would fly to the succour of their Sicilian Majesties, was I not positively forbid to quit my post before Cadiz. I am happy, however, to have a knight of superior prowess in my train, who is charged with this enterprise, at the head of as gallant a band as ever drew sword or trailed pike."

So when the fortunate news arrived that Nelson was once more in the Mediterranean, it seemed that Lady Hamilton was nearer the truth of the British Government's intentions than her husband. The Queen was "impatient for news of the English Squadron." Acton declared that "with the good Admiral Nelson at the head of them, we must hope the desired and long-expected success." Emma was exultant.

But the "expected success" was to be several months delayed. Ill-luck dogged Nelson almost from the time of his entering the Mediterranean, till at last, after many weary weeks, he set eyes on the French fleet among the shoals of Aboukir Bay. On the 20th of May a tremendous storm dismasted his flagship. "Figure to yourself," he tells his wife, "a vain man, on Sunday evening at sunset, walking in his cabin with a squadron about him, who looked up to their chief to lead them to glory, and in whom this chief placed the firmest reliance. . . . Figure to

yourself this proud, conceited man, when the sun rose on Monday morning, his ship dismasted, his fleet dispersed, and himself in such distress that the meanest frigate out of France would have been a very unwelcome guest."

And the worst of all was that the very northerly wind which half-wrecked the *Vanguard* enabled the whole French armament and fleet under Buonaparte's command to put to sea.

The day before this happened Lord St. Vincent had received orders to detach a squadron of twelve sail-of-the-line, with frigates, from his fleet, and to send it into the Mediterranean under the command of "some discreet flag-officer," in quest of the French armament. Lord Spencer had said to him in a private letter, "If you determine to send a detachment, I think it almost unnecessary to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir H. Nelson, whose acquaintance with that part of the world, as well as his activity and disposition, seem to qualify him in a peculiar manner for that service."

Without such advice St. Vincent would probably have chosen Nelson for this important service, as he believed in him strongly, like all who had real knowledge of his abilities. Also Nelson was already in the Mediterranean. So the Commander-in-Chief sent him reinforcements and the following instructions :—

"I do hereby authorize and require you, on being joined by the *Culloden*, *Goliath*, *Minotaur*, *Defence*, *Bellerophon*, *Majestic*, *Audacious*, *Zealous*, *Swiftsure*, and *Theseus*, to take them and their captains under your command, in addition to those already with you, and to proceed with them in quest of the armament preparing by the enemy at Toulon and Genoa. . . . On falling in with the said armament, or any part thereof, you are to use your utmost endeavours to take, sink, burn, or destroy it. . . . On the subject of supplies, I inclose also a copy of their lordships' order to me, and do require you strictly to comply with the spirit of it, by considering and treating as hostile any ports within the Mediterranean (those of Sardinia excepted), where provisions or other articles you may be in want of, and which they are enabled to furnish, shall be refused. . . ."

This was pretty definite; but, to leave no doubt possible, St. Vincent added, "It appears that their Lordships expect favourable neutrality from Tuscany and the Two Sicilies. In any event, you are to exact supplies of whatever you may be in want of from the territories of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the King of the Two Sicilies, the Ottoman territory, Malta, and *ci-devant* Venetian dominions now belonging to the Emperor of Germany."

It has been necessary thus to make clear the sort of instructions Nelson had to back him in

order to maintain a sense of proportion when dealing with the much-discussed question of Lady Hamilton's services in helping the British fleet to victual and water at Syracuse.

Nelson knew quite well the condition imposed on the King and Queen of Naples, that not more than four English ships must enter their ports; he also knew that the Queen, at any rate, chafed at this restriction, and was anxious to help the British squadron. He had the instructions of his own Government to *take* what might be *refused* him; but he had no desire to use force if it could be avoided. Therefore he wrote to Sir William Hamilton on the 12th of June—

"As I am not quite clear, from General Acton's letters to you of 3 and 9 April, what co-operation is intended by the court of Naples, I wish to know perfectly what is to be expected, that I may regulate my movements accordingly, and beg clear answers to the following questions and requisitions: Are the ports of Naples and Sicily open to his Majesty's fleet? Have the governors orders for our free admission, and for us to be supplied with whatever we may want?"

On the 16th of June the van of his squadron hove in sight, and the next day Nelson sent Troubridge and Hardy to Naples, while he himself remained with the rest of his fleet off Capri. Troubridge went at once to the British embassy —Troubridge of whom Nelson had written to Sir

EMMA, LADY HAMILTON

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

William Hamilton a day or so earlier, "I send Captain Troubridge to communicate with your excellency, and, as Captain Troubridge is in full possession of my confidence, I beg that whatever he says may be considered as coming from me." To this he added, with that generous love of praise so characteristic, "Captain Troubridge is my honoured acquaintance of twenty-five years, and the very best sea-officer in his Majesty's service."

Sir William Hamilton at once took Troubridge and Hardy to an informal council at Sir John Acton's house. Nelson wanted an order authorizing him to use the Sicilian ports with more freedom than the French compact permitted—he wanted a sort of informal credential. The King, of course, could not sign such a thing, but Acton might—in his name. There was discussion, hesitation; but "Captain Troubridge went straight to the point"—just as he went straight at the towering ships of Spain off Cape St. Vincent. Acton was prevailed upon to write an order—not very effectual, but, as it seemed, the best that could be done under the circumstances.

Nelson was very far from satisfied with this result, and describing it to Lord St. Vincent, he wrote—

"Captain Troubridge returned with information, that the French fleet were off Malta on

the 8th, going to attack it, that Naples was at peace with the French republic, therefore could afford us no assistance in ships, but that, under the rose, they would give us the use of their ports, and sincerely wished us well, but did not give me the smallest information of what was, or likely to be, the future destination of the French armaments."

The admiral had all the scorn of a man of instant action for the paltry hesitations of those who dared not when they would. It was his temper to say—

> "that we would do
> We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes,
> And hath abatements and delays as many
> As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents."

And there were two women in Naples who held the same faith, and who had nothing but contempt for enforced treaties. While the council was taking place at Acton's house, Emma, who guessed how little it was really likely to effect, went in haste to the Queen, who was still in bed. Then ensued one of the dramatic scenes in which Emma delighted. She told the Queen that all would be lost if Nelson's fleet was not freely supplied, and thus enabled to follow the French. She fell on her knees and implored Maria Carolina not to wait on the hesitating action of the King or the Prime Minister, but to act for herself, and give an order in her own name "to all

Governors of the Two Sicilies to receive with hospitality the British fleet to water, victual, and aid them."

It is a little difficult to believe that the Queen of Naples needed all this dramatic persuasion to do what her own interests and inclinations dictated. However, that is how Lady Hamilton tells the story. The Queen consented, the order was written, and Emma departed, all joy and exultation. Troubridge and Hardy had landed at six o'clock in the morning; at eight the council broke up, and Emma joined them. On their way back together to the Palazzo Sessa she told them what she had done, "producing the order, to their astonishment and delight. They embraced me with patriotic joy. 'It will,' said the gallant Troubridge, 'cheer to extacy our valiant friend, Nelson. Otherwise we must have gone for Gibraltar.'"

On the same day Lady Hamilton wrote to Nelson—

"My dear Admiral,—I write in a hurry as Captain T. Carrol stays on *Monarch*. God bless you, and send you victorious, and that I may see you bring back Buonaparte with you. Pray send Captain Hardy out to us, for I shall have a fever with anxiety. The Queen desires me to say everything that's kind, and bids me say with her whole heart and soul she wishes you victory.

and disappointment. He longed to "try Buonaparte on a wind," and missed the opportunity—which would have changed the destinies of Europe—by a sail's length, as it were. He wrote to his Commander-in-Chief from Alexandria, explaining his failure, and submitting with courageous dignity to the possibility of censure and recall :—

"I am before your Lordship's judgment, which in the present case I feel is the tribunal of my country, and if, under all circumstances, it is decided that I am wrong, I ought, for the sake of our country, to be superseded ; for at this moment, when I know the French are not in Alexandria, I hold the same opinion as off Cape Passaro—viz. that under all circumstances I was right in steering for Alexandria, and by that opinion I must stand or fall. However erroneous my judgment may be, I feel conscious of my honest intentions, which I hope will bear me up under the greatest misfortune that could happen to me as an officer—that of your Lordship's thinking me wrong."

Disappointed, puzzled, driven by his eager and anxious mind, for once failing to take into account the possibility that his own fleet might have outsailed Buonaparte's unwieldy armada, Nelson turned from Alexandria and stretched over to the coast of Caramania, and then, in distress for the safety of the Two Sicilies, returned

to Syracuse, having, in his own words, "gone a round of six hundred leagues with an expedition incredible," and yet come back "as *ignorant* of the situation of the enemy as I was twenty-seven days ago!"

What he suffered during the anxieties and uncertainties of the chase, under the burden of his tremendous responsibilities, is shown by his saying, "On the 18th" [the day before he anchored at Syracuse] "I had near died, with the swelling of some of the vessels of the heart. More people, perhaps, die of broken hearts than we are aware of." Many years later he told Troubridge, "Do not fret at anything, I wish I never had, but my return to Syracuse in 1798, broke my heart, which on any extraordinary anxiety now shows itself, be that feeling pain or pleasure."

At Syracuse the Governor at first made difficulties about admitting more than four English ships; but eventually, under the influence of some talisman from the Queen, the difficulties melted away, and the whole of Nelson's fleet was refreshed. He wrote gratefully to Sir William and Lady Hamilton—

"My dear Friends,—Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered: and surely watering at the Fountain of Arethusa we must have victory. We shall sail with the first

breeze, and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel, or covered with cypress."

And so Nelson and his "band of brothers" once more set their faces towards Egypt.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER THE NILE

THE long pursuit was ended. It was no longer quest but conquest when on the late afternoon of the 1st of August, 1798, Nelson sighted the French fleet anchored in Aboukir Bay. It was near sunset; he had no pilots, the coast was strewn with shoals; but to his inspired determination these were small things; the long-sought enemy was before him. The French flattered themselves that for the night, at least, they were safe. They did not know the English admiral. Like a thunderbolt of war, Nelson fell upon them, irresistible and terrible. All through the hours of dark the battle raged close by the Egyptian shore—lit for a time by the flaming torch of the burning *Orient*, the great French flagship, the thunder of whose explosion was followed by a stunning silence, an awestruck pause, as the seamen stood at their guns with the linstocks burning unheeded in their hands, gazing at the appalling spectacle. When morning broke the French fleet was annihilated—taken, burnt,

or sunk. In its suddenness, one of the most dramatic battles of history; in its completeness, one of the most momentous—the Nile stands out as Nelson's most dazzling achievement. In Mahan's words, "The blow had struck home and resounded through the four quarters of the world."

Nelson might well call it not a victory but a conquest, for its effects were far-reaching. Napoleon's plans were completely undone; his Army of the Pyramids was untouched, but it was no longer a danger. "The French army is in a scrape," wrote Nelson, with his usual strategic insight. "They are up the Nile without supplies. The inhabitants will allow nothing to pass by land, nor H. N. by water."

The joy at Naples, when the news of the overwhelming victory arrived, can only be measured by some knowledge of the previous dejection of the Neapolitan court and the constant menace under which it had been dwelling ever since the outbreak of the French Revolution. From the mouth of the Nile on the 8th of August, with the awe of his great triumph still upon him, Nelson wrote very simply to Sir William Hamilton: "Almighty God has made me the happy instrument in destroying the enemy's fleet; which, I hope, will be a blessing to Europe."

Captain Capel and Lieutenant Hoste brought the splendid news to Naples in the *Mutine*, and

"ARIADNE"
GEORGE ROMNEY

were received with acclaim. Maria Carolina's raptures far outstepped the usual bounds of royal decorum; she wept and laughed and walked up and down in a passion of relief. Emma, as might be expected, did not hide her light under a bushel. It was the most glorious occasion that ever a woman had lived to take part in. Nelson was her countryman, the friend of her husband and herself, and they had aided him to this superb victory. The state of almost hysterical exultation into which she was thrown is best shown by the letter she wrote to Nelson on the 8th of September:—

"My dear, dear Sir,—How shall I begin what shall I say to you? 'Tis impossible I can write, for since last Monday I am delerious with joy, and assure you I have a fevour caused by agitation and pleasure. God, what a victory! Never, never has there been anything half so glorious, so compleat. I fainted when I heard the joyfull news, and fell on my side and am hurt, but [am] now well of that. I shou'd feil it a glory to die in such a cause. No, I wou'd not like to die till I see and embrace the Victor of the *Nile*. How shall I describe to you the transports of Maria Carolina, 'tis not possible. She fainted and kissed her husband, her children, walked about the room, cried, kissed, and embraced every person near her, exclaiming, *Oh*,

brave Nelson, oh, God bless and protect our brave deliverer, oh, Nelson, Nelson, what do we not owe to you, oh Victor, Savour of Itali, oh, that my swolen heart cou'd now tell him personally what we owe to him!

"You may judge, my dear Sir, of the rest, but my head will not permit me to tell you half of the rejoicing. The Neapolitans are mad with joy, and if you wos here now, you wou'd be killed with kindness. Sonets on sonets, illuminations, rejoicings; not a French dog dare shew his face. How I glory in the honner of my Country and my *Countryman!* I walk and tread in air with pride, feiling I was born in the same land with the victor Nelson and his gallant band. But no more, I cannot, dare not, trust myself, for I am not well. Little dear Captain Hoste will tell you the rest. He dines with us in the day, for he will not sleep out of his ship, and we Love him dearly. He is a fine, good lad. Sir William is delighted with him, and I say he will be a second Nelson. If he is only half a Nelson, he will be superior to all others.

"I send you two letters from my adorable queen. One was written to me the day we received the glorious news, the other yesterday. Keep them, as they are in her own handwriting. I have kept copies only, but I feil that you ought to have them. If you had seen our meeting after the battle, but I will keep it all for your arrival.

I coo'd not do justice to her feiling nor to my own, with writing it; and we are preparing your appartment against you come. I hope it will not be long, for Sir William and I are so impatient to embrace you. I wish you cou'd have seen our house the 3 nights of illumination. 'Tis, 'twas covered with your glorious name. Their were 3 thousand Lamps, and their shou'd have been 3 millions if we had had time. All the English vie with each other in celebrating this most gallant and ever memorable victory. Sir William is ten years younger since the happy news, and he now only wishes to see his friend to be completely happy. How he glories in you when your name is mentioned. He cannot contain his joy. For God's sake come to Naples soon. We receive so many Sonets and Letters of congratulation. I send you some of them to shew you how your success is felt here. How I felt for poor Troubridge. He must have been so angry on the sandbank, so brave an officer! In short, I pity those who were not in the battle. I wou'd have been rather an English powder-monkey, or a swab in that great victory, than an Emperor out of it, but you will be so tired of all this. Write or come soon to Naples, and rejoin your ever sincere and obliged friend.

"Emma Hamilton"

There is something of the real heroic ring in

that letter, in spite of its extravagance and lack of balance, its extraordinary demonstrativeness. But if the letter is somewhat extraordinary, so were the circumstances. Emma would have been less than English had she not carried a swelling heart in her breast and looked upon Nelson with eyes of worship. Triumphs at sea there were in the memory of men then living—the glorious 1st of June, Rodney's Battle of the Saints, and, earlier, Hawke's great victory of Quiberon Bay; but the lustre of the Nile eclipsed them all. Moreover, to Emma the older admirals were names, and no more; but Nelson she knew; Nelson she had seen and spoken with.

Long had Emma yearned for great events and when she found herself in the very midst of an unparalleled occasion, she missed no single moment, omitted no single sign of rejoicing. Indeed, her festivities were as exuberant as herself. The greatness of the time must be symbolized in every way. She tells the victorious admiral, "My dress from head to foot is *alla* Nelson. Ask Hoste. Even my shawl is in Blue with gold anchors all over. My earrings are Nelson's anchors; in short, we are be-Nelsoned all over."

In that little account is revealed one of Lady Hamilton's characteristic failings—the lack of delicacy and love of prominence which permitted her to use the names of Nelson and the Nile as toys and trimmings for her own adornment,

to consider "we are be-Nelsoned all over," a further cause of satisfaction for the great admiral. Nelson's own attitude towards the battle was so finely different. "The hand of God," he wrote to his father, "was visibly pressed on the French: it was not in the power of man to gain such a Victory." Nelson had a child-like vanity which was the outward manifestation of a very superb and deep-rooted faith in himself, but till he came under the influence of Lady Hamilton his vanity —if vanity it can be called in such a man—was of a simple and engaging sort, never guilty of those outrages to taste and feeling of which Emma herself was so fatally capable. But Emma's lack of restraint and dignity was offset by her fine large nature and her endless capacity for toiling in the service of those she loved and honoured. Stern old St. Vincent had called her the "Patroness of the Navy," and it was a name she fully deserved. All who had fought with Nelson were entitled to her exertions and her enthusiastic admiration. Captain Ball wrote to her in the following year: "I find, that you fascinate all the navy as much at Palermo as you did at Naples. If we had many such advocates, every body would be a candidate for our profession." Indeed, till the time when Troubridge ventured to speak his mind about her behaviour with Nelson, there was hardly an officer or seaman in the British fleet who did not think her as kind as she was

beautiful—with the exception of the lieutenant of a frigate which visited Naples when hunting for Nelson before the Battle of the Nile, and who said curtly, "I thought her a very handsome, vulgar woman."

But in spite of the rapture at Naples, the illuminations, the sonnets—Lady Hamilton tells him it would be necessary to "have taken a ship on purpose to send you all written on you"—the assurance that the Queen "shall be for ever unhappy if you do not come," the knowledge that his apartment was prepared for him at the Palazzo Sessa, in spite of all these things Nelson was reluctant to return to Naples. Lady Hamilton's excitable account of the Queen's agitation simply moved him to say, "I only hope I shall not have to be witness to a renewal of it." In a letter written at sea to Lord St. Vincent, two days before he reached Naples, he said—

"I detest this voyage to Naples; nothing but absolute necessity could force me to the measure. Syracuse in future, whilst my operations lie on the eastern side of Sicily, is my port, where every refreshment may be had for a fleet. . . . On the day Hoste left me I was taken with a fever, which has very near done my business: for eighteen hours my life was thought to be past hope; I am now up but very weak, both in body and mind, from my cough and this fever."

He was little inclined for the extravagant

plaudits of Naples, and little tempted by Sir William Hamilton's invitation, though it was given in the kindest words. "Come here for God's sake, my dear friend," said the British Ambassador, warmly, "as soon as the service will permit you. A pleasant apartment is ready for you in my house, and Emma is looking out for the softest pillows to repose the few wearied limbs you have left."

But in forecast Nelson regarded the whole business with dread and a sort of shrinking—a dread that might almost be regarded as prophetic in view of later happenings.

On the 22nd of September, the battered *Vanguard*—the ship which had borne Nelson in his long chase of the French and been his flagship at the Nile—anchored in the Bay of Naples. A tremendous ovation was prepared for the returned and victorious admiral; flowers and music, and crowds of small boats dotting the Bay, while radiant sunshine transfigured everything and the thunder of saluting guns shook the tranquil air. The King in his yacht came out three leagues to meet and greet Nelson, while with him were the Hamiltons. Nelson described the meeting to his wife at home:—

"I must endeavour to convey to you something of what passed; but if it were so affecting to those who were only united to me by bonds of friendship, what must it be to my

dearest wife, my friend, my everything which is most dear to me in the world? Sir William and Lady Hamilton came out to sea, attended by numerous Boats with emblems, etc. They, my most respectable friends, had really been laid up and seriously ill; first from anxiety, and then from joy. It was imprudently told Lady Hamilton in a moment, and the effect was like a shot; she fell apparently dead, and is not yet perfectly recovered from severe bruises. Alongside came my honoured friends: the scene in the boat was terribly affecting. Up flew her Ladyship, and exclaiming, 'O God! Is it possible?' she fell into my arm more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters to rights; when alongside came the King. The scene was in its way as interesting. He took me by the hand, calling me his 'Deliverer and Preserver,' with every other expression of kindness. In short, all Naples calls me '*Nostro Liberatore*.' My greetings from the lowest classes are truly affecting. I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton; she is one of the very best women in this world, she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's to me, is more than I can express. I am in their house, and I may tell you it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up. Lady Hamilton intends writing to you. May God Almighty bless you, and give us in due time, a happy meeting."

LADY HAMILTON DANCING

FROM A DRAWING BY LOCK

Nelson's meeting with his wife did not take place till November, 1800, and then it was far from "happy," but shadowed by reproaches, doubts, and many fears. It is a strange circumstance that he should have written to his wife in this strain of somewhat special tenderness just after he had met Lady Hamilton again.

At first Nelson was anxious not to be dependent on the generous hospitality of the Hamiltons; but his scruples were overruled, and he went to the British Embassy, where Emma cared for him with great tenderness and pride. He was much changed and worn since she had seen him five years before; at the Nile he had received a severe wound in the head, as well as losing his right eye and arm in earlier engagements. The strain of his agonizing chase after the French was still visibly upon him, and he was shaken with fever. All her essentially womanly heart went out to him in his weakness and his heroism, and she tended him with that genius for nursing and that motherly kindness which were native and natural to her. Nelson was grateful, he was all his life susceptible to the gentleness of women; but through it all there was a certain fret and fever on his spirit, he did not like Naples, he did not like the Neapolitans. His first instincts were his true ones, and though later they were drowned under floods of flattery and his growing passion for Lady Hamilton, yet

the simple Englishman and sailor that he was at heart could at first find little satisfaction in frothy popularity and the unstable conduct of the Neapolitans. Only eight days after his arrival at Naples he was writing to his friend and Commander-in-Chief, St. Vincent: "I trust, my Lord, in a week we shall all be at sea. I am very unwell, and the miserable conduct of this Court is not likely to cool my irritable temper. It is a country of fiddlers and poets and scoundrels."

To his wife a day later he wrote that "between business and what is called pleasure, I am not my own master for five minutes." But though he was already sick of Naples he began to feel much attachment to the Hamiltons; to his wife he goes on, "The continued kind attention of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, must ever make you and I love them, and they are deserving the love and admiration of all the world. . . . My pride is being your husband, the son of my dear father, and in having Sir William and Lady Hamilton for my friends."

But it must be admitted that Lady Hamilton's "kind attentions" sometimes took an alarming form for a man weakened by wounds and fever. On Nelson's birthday, the 29th of September, she gave a great ball at the Palazzo Sessa, to which one thousand seven hundred and forty people came, preceded by a dinner for eighty

and followed by a supper for eight hundred guests! But Emma did wiser things for the Hero of the Nile than giving tremendous birthday parties, and when he left Naples to take up the blockade before Malta he was greatly restored in health. St. Vincent, who loved Nelson like his own son, wrote to her towards the end of October—

"Ten thousand most grateful thanks are due to your Ladyship, for restoring the health of our invaluable friend Nelson, on whose life the fate of the remaining governments in Europe, whose system has not been deranged by these devils, depends. Pray, do not let your fascinating Neapolitan dames approach too near him; for he is made of flesh and blood, and cannot resist their temptations. Lady St. Vincent will be transported with your attention to her. I have sent the fan mounts for Lady Nelson and her, by Sir James Saumarez. . . . Continue to love me; and rest assured of the most unfeigned and affectionate regard of, my dear Lady Hamilton, your faithful and devoted Knight.

"St. Vincent"

Writing himself to Earl St. Vincent before he left Naples, Nelson says playfully—

"I am writing opposite Lady Hamilton, therefore you will not be surprised at the glorious

jumble of this letter. Were your Lordship in my place, I much doubt if you could write so well; our hearts and our hands must be all in a flutter: Naples is a dangerous place, and we must keep clear of it."

After Nelson's departure, Lady Hamilton wrote at some length to his wife. This letter is dated October 2, 1798, but internal evidence goes to prove that this must be a slip of the pen, for November or (as Sir Harris Nicolas gives it) more probably December. Nelson did not reach Naples till the 22nd of September, and did not leave till the middle of October, so that on the second of that month Emma could not refer to his departure, nor could she have "wrote a month back" of events which were not then a fortnight old, not to speak of the still more definite dating of the letter by the references to the war with France, and to Nelson's barony, which was not officially granted till the 17th of November. The letter runs as follows:—

"I hope your Ladyship received my former letter with an account of Lord Nelson's arrival, and his reception by their Sicilian Majesties; and allso the congratulations and compliments from this amiable Queen to your Ladyship which I was charged with and wrote a month back, but as the posts were very uncertain you may not have received that letter. Lord Nelson is gone

to Leghorn with the troops of the King of Naples, and we expect him soon Back, as the King is gone to Rome with his army; and he beg'd of my Lord Nelson to be as much in and about Naples as he cou'd, not only to advise and consult with her Majesty, who is Regent for the good of the common cause, but, in case of accident, to take care of her and of her family.

"Lord Nelson is adored here, and looked on as the deliverer of this country. He was not well when first he arrived, but by nursing and asse's milk he went from Naples quite recovered.

"The King and Queen adore him, and if he had been their Brother, they cou'd not have shewn him more respect and attentions. I need not tell your Ladyship how happy Sir William and myself are at having an opertunity of seeing our dear, respectable, brave friend return here with so much honner to himself, and glory for his country. We only wanted you to be completely happy. Lord Nelson's wound is quite well. Josiah is so much improv'd in every respect, we are all delighted with him. He is an excellent officer and very steady, and one of the best hearts in the world. I Love him much, and allthough we quarrel sometimes, he loves me and does as I wou'd have him. He is in the way of being rich, for he has taken many prizes. He is indefatigable in his line, never sleeps out of his ship, and I am sure will make a very great officer. . . . The

King is having his picture set with dymonds for his Lordship, and the Queen has ordered a fine set of china with all the battles he has been engaged in, and his picture painted on china. Josiah desired his duty to your Ladyship, and says he will write as soon as he [h]as time, but he has been very busy for some time past.

"God bless you and your's, my dear Madam, and believe me your Ladyship's very sincere friend. EMMA HAMILTON

"Sir William is in a rage with [the] ministry for not having made Lord Nelson a Viscount, for, sure, this great and glorious action—greater than any other—ought to have been recognized more. Hang them, I say."

It would be interesting to know what Lady Nelson, in her quiet refinement and propriety, thought of the somewhat underbred vehemence of that last remark! But in other respects it is a kind, generous, and friendly letter. No suspicion of the great wrong she was to do Lady Nelson had as yet crossed the mind of Emma Hamilton.

Neither Nelson nor Emma were given to considering the effect their words might have upon their correspondents; what was in their hearts came out with a rush, without thought of its incongruity or odd effect, and it is this naturalness which makes Nelson's letters so eloquent of

the man, just as we feel Emma's impulsive heart panting behind her artless, excitable, ill-spelt words. Most men would not have chosen the cynical old St. Vincent as confidant of the fact that "Lady Hamilton is an Angel;" but if Nelson had it in his mind he said it with the same beautiful directness and simplicity with which he sprang from deck to deck of the conquered Spanish ships—his "Patent Bridge" for boarding First-Rates. After that little outburst over Lady Hamilton, he goes on: "She has honoured me by being my ambassadress to the queen: therefore she has my implicit confidence and is worthy of it."

This statement reveals the beginning of his faith in Lady Hamilton's diplomatic abilities; and judging from the evidence it seems clear that it was not simply her beauty, her enthusiasm, and her womanly tenderness that drew Nelson towards her, but a belief in her qualities of head as well as heart. Quite early in their acquaintance this man, who had so daringly and constantly thought for himself and followed his own decisions in face of all the dangers that threaten defiance of authority, was beginning to share his opinions with Lady Hamilton, and to adopt her views on Sicilian matters to a considerable extent. Neither she nor the Queen of Naples, whose mouthpiece she was, were safe guides in matters of high politics. Like most women—though they were

both clever ones—they saw things too much through a mist of passion and prejudice. But they both had the daring temper, the disregard of obstacles, which marked Nelson himself; and partly through the glamour they cast over him, partly through his own fervent hatred of the French, Nelson was committed to advice which did much to plunge the kingdom of Naples into war. That Nelson should have urged this act upon the weak and unstable kingdom was one of his rare failures in judgment, and its consequences were doubly disastrous—not merely to Naples and the misguided Court, but disastrous to Nelson himself, who was thus bound, by ties he could not sever without an appearance of desertion, to a Court he had partly led into war, and this tangle was the beginning of his connection with Lady Hamilton. Thus it was from a temporary failure of judgment, the temporary error of a brain usually as quick and keen as it was rightly inspired, came this tragedy of the heart and the single blot on the scutcheon.

The beginning of the business is shown by the letter Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton on the 3rd of October, 1798, which in the postscript he told her to regard as a "preparative" for Sir William and as "the firm and unalterable opinion of a British Admiral, anxious to approve himself a faithful Servant to his Sovereign by doing everything in his power for the happiness and

STUDY OF LADY HAMILTON

GEORGE ROMNEY

security of their Sicilian Majesties and their Kingdoms."

In passing, it may be said that it was less the business of a British admiral to push their Sicilian Majesties into a war for which they were not fitted, than to attend to his own affair of punishing the French. But already Nelson's vision was a little clouded—not so much by the flatteries as by the appeals of the Neapolitan Court, represented with so much ardour by Emma —and the tangled web in which he involved himself when serving Maria Carolina was already subtly closing round this simple-hearted British admiral, who, all unconsciously at first, was being led by the silken thread of a woman's influence.

His letter to Lady Hamilton explains the situation and his own views upon it :—

"My dear Madam,—The anxiety which you and Sir William Hamilton have always had for the happiness of their Sicilian Majesties, was also planted in me five years past, and I can truly say, that on every occasion which has offered (which have been numerous) I have never failed to manifest my sincere regard for the felicity of these Kingdoms. Under this attachment, I cannot be an indifferent spectator to what has and is passing in the Two Sicilies, nor to the misery which, (without being a politician,) I cannot but

see plainly is ready to fall on those Kingdoms, now so loyal, by the worst of all policy—that of procrastination. Since my arrival in these seas in June last, I have seen in the Sicilians the most loyal people to their Sovereign, with the utmost detestation of the French and their principles. Since my arrival at Naples I have found all ranks, from the very highest to the lowest, eager for war with the French, who, all know, are preparing an Army of robbers to plunder these Kingdoms and destroy the Monarchy. I have seen the Minister of the insolent French pass over in silence the manifest breach of the third article of the Treaty between his Sicilian Majesty and the French Republic. Ought not this extraordinary conduct to be seriously noticed? Has not the uniform conduct of the French been to lull Governments into a false security, and then to destroy them? As I have before stated, is it not known to every person that Naples is the next marked object for plunder? With this knowledge, and that his Sicilian Majesty has an Army ready (I am told) to march into a Country anxious to receive them, with the advantage of carrying the War from, instead of waiting for it at, home, I am all astonished that the Army has not marched a month ago. . . . But should, unfortunately, this miserable ruinous system of procrastination be persisted in, I would recommend that all your property and persons are ready to embark at a very short

notice. It will be my duty to look and provide for your safety, and with it (I am sorry to think it will be necessary) that of the amiable Queen of these Kingdoms and her Family. I have read with admiration her dignified and incomparable Letter of September, 1796. May the Councils of the Kingdoms ever be guided by such sentiments of dignity, honour, and justice; and may the words of the great William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, be instilled into the Ministry of this Country—'*The boldest measures are the safest.*'"

Such was Nelson's advice; and it is significant that he wrote this letter to Lady Hamilton, and not to the British Ambassador, trusting to her influence with Sir William to urge the case upon him and upon the Court. In pressing for war, Nelson may have considered that he was justified by his instructions from the Admiralty—part of his duty as set forth by My Lords being "The protection of the coasts of Sicily, Naples, and the Adriatic, and in the event of the war being renewed in Italy, an active co-operation with the Austrian and Neapolitan armies."

His natural instinct as a sea-officer was really the true one, and that turned towards the scene of his great battle. To Lady Hamilton he wrote, on the 24th of October, when off Malta, "I feel my duty lays at present in the East." But his judgment was perverted, and his course turned

by what was in reality an unscrupulous appeal to his chivalry. A few days later he was writing to his Commander-in-Chief: "I am, I fear, drawn into a promise that Naples Bay shall never be left without an English Man-of-War. I never intended leaving the Coast of Naples without one; but if I had, who could withstand the request of such a Queen?"

Once having made up his mind, Nelson's temper was always for instant action, so the delays and hesitancy of the King of Naples before the somewhat nerve-shaking prospect of making war on the French were intensely irritating to his vehement spirit. "Naples sees this squadron no more," he wrote (before the date of his promise to the Queen) to Lord Spencer, "except the king calls for our help, and if they go on, and lose the glorious moments, we may be called for to save the persons of their majesties."

Meanwhile, Nelson had an ardent ally in Emma Hamilton, who, after his departure from Naples on the 15th of October, had gone to Caserta to be near the Queen. She wrote to him on the 20th—

"I flatter myself WE SPUR them, for I am allways with the Queen, and I hold out your energick language to her. Mack is writing. He does not go to visit the frontiers, but is now working night and day, and then goes for good. And I tell her Majesty, *for God's sake, for the*

LADY HAMILTON AS "CASSANDRA"

GEORGE ROMNEY

Country's sake, and for your own sake, send him of as soon as possible, no time to be lost, and I believe he goes after to-morrow. . . . I translate from our papers for her to inspire her, *or them,* I should say, with some of our spirit and energy. How delighted we Booth were to sit and speak of you. She loves, respects, and admires you. For myself, I will leave you to guess my feilings. Poor dear Trowbridge staid that night to comfort us. What a good, dear soul he is!" She hopes his doctor is satisfied with his health, she begs him to write and come soon, adding—as if he were wanted only there!—with all the emphasis of underscoring, "*you are wanted at Caserta.* All their noddles are not worth your's."

In her next letter, four days later, she informs him of what is coming for him from Constantinople:—

"A *pelicia* of Gibelini with a feather for your hat of Dymonds, large, most magnificent, and 2 thousand Zechins for the wounded men, and a letter to you from the Grand Signor, God bless him! There is a frigate sent of[f] on purpose. We expect it here. I must see the present. How I shall look at it, smel it, taste it, to[u]ch it, put the pelice over my own shoulders, look in the glas, and say Viva il Turk! . . . God bless, or Mahomet bless, the old Turk; I say, no longer Turk, but good Christian."

In another letter she bursts out into the

somewhat childish extravagance, "If I were King of England I wou'd make you the most noble present, *Duke Nelson, Marquis Nile, Earl Aboukir,* Viscount Pyramid, Baron Crocodile, and Prince Victory, that posterity might have you in all forms." To Emma neither beauty nor greatness unadorned were adorned the most—she failed to realize that the simple name of Nelson was nobler than any superb or fantastic titles which might be tacked on to it.

Her letters from Caserta, written in the diary style she was fond of, and which was so convenient in view of the thick-thronging events, give Nelson all the news. On the 24th of October she says, "We have been 2 days desperate on account of the weak and cool acting of the Cabinet of Viena." The Emperor of Austria is "a poor sop;" the Queen of Naples is "in a rage." Two couriers have arrived, one from London with "the lovely news of a fleet to remain in the Mediterranean; a treaty made of the most flattering kind for Naples. In short, everything amicable, friendly, and most truly honnerable." But this was offset by the conduct of the Austrian Court, the letters brought by the second courier being "cold, unfriendly, mistrustful, frenchified, and saying plainly, help yourselves. How the dear Maria Carolina cried for joy at the one, and rage at the other." But at last the Austrian general, Mack, had gone to

prepare the army to march immediately. "And I flatter myself," says Emma, "I did much. For whilst the passions of the Queen [were] up and agitated, I got up, put out my left arm like you, spoke the language of truth to her, painted the drooping situation of this fine country, her friends sacrificed, her husband, children, and herself led to the Block; and eternal dishonour to her memory, after for once having been active, doing her duty in fighting bravely to the last, to save her Country, her Religion, from the hands of the rapacious murderers of her sister, and the Royal Family in France, that she was sure of being lost, if they were inactive, and their was a chance of being saved if they made use now of the day, and struck now while all minds are imprest with the Horrers their neighbours are suffering from these Robbers. In short, their was a Council, and it was determined to march out and help themselves; and, sure, their poor fool of a son" [Emma means the Emperor of Austria, who was *son-in-law* to the King and Queen of Naples] "will not, cannot, but come out. He must bring a hundred and fifty thousand men in the Venetian State. The French cou'd be shut in between the two armys, italy cleared, and peace restored."

Thus the ardent Emma. To see her "painting the drooping situation," with her left arm extended in imitation of Nelson, is surely a very triumph of the "Attitudes"! Certain it is that

Nelson would be struck with the picture presented to his imagination, he would admire her spirit, and be grateful for her advocacy of his views. Nearly all the rest of this letter is a pæan of praise of the two most glorious beings then existing in the estimation of Emma Hamilton—Nelson and Maria Carolina. She becomes intoxicated with admiration as she thinks of them. She tells Nelson, "But how every body loves and esteems you. 'Tis universal from the high to the low; and, do you know, I sing now nothing but the Conquering Hero. . . . God bless you, prosper and assist you in all you undertake; and may you live Long, Long, Long, for the sake of your country, your King, your familly, all Europe, Asia, Affrica, and America, and for the scorge of France, but particularly for the happiness of Sir William and self, who Love you, admire you, and glory in your friendship." Then she falls to reflecting on the gratitude England owes him: "Your statue ought to be made of pure gold and placed in the middle of London. Never, never was there such a battle, and if you are not regarded as you ought, and I wish, I will renounce my country and become either a Mameluch or a Turk. The Queen yesterday said to me, 'the more I think on it, the greater I find it, and I feil such gratitude to the warrior, the glorious Nelson, that my respect is such that I cou'd fall at his honner'd feet and kiss them.' You that

know us booth, and how alike we are in many things, that is, I as Emma Hamilton, and she as Queen of Naples—imagine us booth speaking of you. We touch ourselves into terms of rapture, respect, and admiration, and conclude their is not such another in the world. I told her Majesty, we onely wanted Lady Nelson to be the female *tria juncta in uno*, for we all Love you, and yet all three differently, and yet all equally—if you can make that out. Sir William laughs at us, but he owns women have great souls, at least his has. I would not be a lukewarm friend for the world.

"I am no one's enemy, and unfortunately am difficult, and cannot make friendships with all. But the few friends I have, I wou'd die for them. And I assure you now, if things take an unfortunate turn here, and the Queen dies at her post, I will remain with her. I feil I owe it to her friendship uncommon for me."

Assuredly, with all her faults, Emma was no "lukewarm friend," though equally certainly she deceived herself when she said she was "difficult"—in reality the fundamental weakness of her character was that she was too easy. But in her ardour, her generous, even extravagant enthusiasm, her real courage and grit, she was a woman after Nelson's own heart—as he was already beginning to discover. "My situation in this country," he wrote from Naples at the beginning

of December to Commodore Duckworth, who had just captured Minorca, "has had doubtless *one* rose, but it has been plucked from a bed of thorns." Within five months of the Nile, in the midst of thronging events and many anxieties, Emma was thus beginning to stand out in his eyes from all around her.

The time was rapidly approaching when Emma's courage was to be put to the test. Idle boasting was dangerous for those who lived amid wars and rumours of wars, for quick on the heels of the boast came the imperative need to prove it. But Emma's fondness for big words was based on a fondness for big actions, and she welcomed the occasion when it faced her. As Mahan says, "There was in her make-up a good deal of pagan virtue." And Greville's quite just estimate of her was, "Emma's passion is admiration, and it is capable of aspiring to any line which will be celebrated, and it would be indifferent, when on that key, whether she was Lucretia or Sappho, or Scævola or Regulus; anything grand, masculine or feminine, she could take up."

By the end of November the King of Naples and General Mack—whom Rosebery describes as "a strategist of unalloyed incompetency and unvaried failure"—had marched to Rome with their army and entered the city in triumph. But the first triumph was the last; the French defeated Mack's scattered columns in detail, and on the

7th of December Ferdinand fled from Rome, while the retreat of his rash and untrained army quickly became a rout. Nelson scornfully wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty: "The Neapolitan officers have not lost much honour, for God knows they have but little to lose; but they lost all they had." The soldiers who ran away at Toulon ran away again; while the officers, said Nelson, "seemed alarmed at a drawn sword, or a gun, if loaded with shot."

Having been so dared by the ill-advised King of Naples, the French speedily followed him across the frontiers of his kingdom; and thus the war that was to have been carried into the enemies' territory and away from home, came hot upon the footsteps of the defeated Ferdinand. There seemed no alternative for the distracted Court save flight. But though the French were on the borders, and the fate of Marie Antoinette and her Consort seemed hovering above the heads of the Sicilian sovereigns, yet there were many difficulties in Naples. The Lazzaroni were entirely loyal to their King; but it was a fierce loyalty, ready to tear him and his wife and children in pieces if they saw any signs of escape—which naturally enough in their eyes would wear all the ugly colours of desertion and abandonment.

In this tangle of fears and dangers Emma Hamilton's sound English grit came out. It seemed that into her hands and into Nelson's was

committed the safety of the Sicilian Court. They worked together, and in that working, amid storm and the peril of death, came to such knowledge of each other as first led them into love. He stood upon the height of his fame—a fame unmarred and perfect; she had touched the last point of her beauty—the point at which the rose has reached its fullest and final flowering before the petals fall. And to the woman who had in so large a measure redeemed the past, as to the man whose past was bright with glorious deeds without a blot to darken it—to them at this dangerous and inflammable time came no voice saying, "Have regard to thy name; for that shall continue with thee above a thousand great treasures of gold."

CHAPTER X

THE FLIGHT FROM NAPLES

FOR the first and last time in his life Nelson was to counsel flight. He came back to Naples from Leghorn on the 5th of December, and ten days later was writing urgently to Troubridge—

"Things are in such a critital state here, that I desire you will join me without one moment's loss of time. . . . The King is returned here, and everything is as bad as possible. For God's sake make haste! Approach the place with caution. Messina, probably, I shall be found at; but you can inquire at the Lipari Islands if we are at Palermo."

Things were indeed "as bad as possible." The population of Naples was in a ferment. The upper and middle classes were most affected by the republican spirit—which did not touch the uneducated and priest-ridden peasants and fisherfolk—and were already turning in secret welcome towards the oncoming French, while traitors and spies lurked about the precincts of the Palace.

The Lazzaroni, as has been said, were loyal to the King and Queen; but their loyalty took the alarming form of going up and down the streets murdering those suspected of French sympathies or French birth, and continually shouting for Ferdinand and Maria Carolina, that with their own eyes they might be satisfied the sovereigns had not fled, but were trusting to the loyalty and courage of their brave Lazzaroni to protect them from the French armies now rapidly drawing near Naples.

The Queen was no coward, and her wish was to stay in Naples and await what might befall. The early disasters that overtook General Mack left her determination unshaken. When Nelson and Lady Hamilton urged upon her the pressing necessity of flight, she could only see it as disgrace, and a "fresh blow to her soul and spirit." She was anxious to send her children out of danger, but even that seemed impossible in face of the thronging difficulties. The dignity of despair came to her. "I have renounced this world," she wrote. "I have renounced my reputation as wife and mother. I am preparing to die, and making ready for an eternity for which I long. This is all that is left to me."

But Emma was by no means making ready for eternity; she had no intention of quitting the world's stage at this very moment of highest

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From an engraving by K. Mack[illegible]

dramatic interest. It was not that she feared death—her physical courage, as was shortly to be proved, was of a very genuine and reliable quality—but she loved life too much to be prepared to leave it without a struggle. It is impossible to help feeling that the universal air of tragedy and gloom, a kingdom shaking to its fall, revolutions, invading armies, a queen in tears, appealed to the play-actress in Emma as a superb stage-setting. She moved through these days to the accompaniment of appropriate music —muted strings, and the threatening thunder of the double-bass.

But she was practical as well as dramatic. If the royal family had to fly they must carry their valuables with them, not leaving gold, jewels, rare vases and paintings, to fall into the hands of the execrable French. This was an affair of considerable difficulty, for the bulky treasure had to be packed and removed in secrecy, lest rumour of the intended flight should get abroad. Here was a matter specially adapted to Emma's gifts, by reason of her skill and quickness of resource. Nelson provided transport; he sent for the *Goliath*, for Troubridge in the *Culloden*, and his squadron; and on the 14th of December Captain Hope in the *Alcmene* arrived from Egypt—the *Vanguard* till their arrival having been the only man-of-war in the Bay. Besides this, there were three transports for the

effects of the English refugees, and a number of merchant ships. During these anxious days of preparation the *Vanguard* was being painted and fitted with cots to receive the royal guests, while Nelson's Journal contains notes of other preparations. "Getting ready for sea," he writes, "and getting off the valuable effects of Her Sicilian Majesty in the night time." The next day it is, "Smuggling on board the Queen's diamonds, etc."

While he worked with the ships in the Bay, Emma worked on shore. She cheered the Queen, she fetched or received at the British Embassy cases containing the royal valuables, which were then transported to the ships. In secrecy and danger she played her part to admiration. There was none of the timid care in Lady Hamilton that induced Nelson's wife to beg him, after St. Vincent, "to leave boarding to captains." Emma was made of very different stuff, coarser in texture, but strong to stand a strain ; while her gallant spirit responded instantly all on fire to the heroic act, the daring deed. Even when the odds were life or death or a kingdom, cold caution never checked her courage. "The whole correspondence relative to this import business," wrote Nelson to St. Vincent, "was carried on with the greatest address by Lady Hamilton and the Queen, who being constantly in the habits of correspondence, no one

could suspect. It would have been highly imprudent in either Sir William Hamilton or myself to have gone to Court, as we knew that all our movements were watched, and even an idea by the Jacobins of arresting our persons as a hostage." In the same letter Nelson says that from the 14th to the 21st of December every night Lady Hamilton received the jewels, clothes, and other effects of the royal family, "to the amount, I am confident, of full two millions five hundred thousand pounds sterling."

While these measures were being carried out the Neapolitan populace showed increasing excitement. On the 20th, "very large assemblies of people were in commotion, and several people were killed." The embarkation was fixed for the night of the 21st of December, but there were hesitations, delays, a last clinging to the hope that Providence would interfere on behalf of the Sicilian royalties. General Acton had at last reached the point of thinking that "no time should be lost;" but he hastened to qualify that rash statement by adding, "If the wind does not blow too hard."

But even the delay of a night was more than Nelson would endure calmly. He was firm in his determination that as flight was the only remedy, it should be adopted without further dalliance. As the evening of the 21st drew on, the Queen sat down in her dismantled palace to

write a heart-broken letter to her daughter the Empress of Austria. Naples was in a tumult, the secret assassin walked the streets, the cloud of failure and disaster lay heavy on her spirit. Emma and Nelson were her only hope at this dark crisis, and they were both absent. On the very eve of the momentous flight, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, with Nelson, were attending a reception—which might well seem a strange form of amusement for people who had so much on their hands. But Emma gives the reason in her Prince Regent Memorial, written many years later :—

"To shew the caution and secrecy that was necessarily used in thus getting away, I had on the night of our embarkation to attend the party given by the Kilim Effendi, who was sent by the grand seignior to Naples to present Nelson with the Shahlerih or Plume of Triumph. I had to steal from the party, leaving our carriages and equipages waiting at his house, and in about fifteen minutes to be at my post, where it was my task to conduct the Royal Family through the subterranean passage to *Nelson's boats*, by that moment waiting for us on the shore."

In a letter written to Charles Greville after reaching Palermo, she carries the adventure a little further, giving more detail :—

"On the 21st, at ten at night, Lord Nelson, Sir Wm., Mother and self went out to pay a visit,

sent all our servants away, and ordered them in 2 hours to come with the coach, and ordered supper at home. When they were gone, we sett off, walked to our boat, and after two hours got to the *Vanguard*. Lord N. *then* went with armed boats to a secret passage adjoining to the pallace, got up the dark staircase that goes into the Queen's room, and with a dark lantern, cutlases, pistols, etc., brought off every soul, ten in number, to the *Vanguard* at twelve o'clock. If we had remained to the next day, we shou'd have all been imprisoned."

Could anything be more gloriously to Emma's taste than this Arabian Nights adventure? First the reception, where she appeared to avert suspicion, feigning nonchalance and pleasure, then the swift walk to the waterside, where Nelson's boats waited in the dark, the secret passage, the "dark lantern, cutlases, pistols, etc." It is impossible to help thinking that the excitable Emma piled on her plurals a little here; Nelson, with his single hand, could hardly have managed more than one dark lantern, pistol, and cutlass, to say nothing of the "etc"! But that is typically Emma; she loved to paint with a broad brush and plenty of colour.

It will be noticed that her two accounts—the Prince Regent Memorial, and the letter to Greville—do not quite harmonize. In the one she says that *she personally* conducted the royal family

through the subterranean passage to the boats, while in the other (written within a few weeks of the actual happening) the implication is that Nelson, armed to the teeth as in the pages of boys' fiction, undertook this business. Emma had not the temperament that is marked by meticulous accuracy, and this, like many another of her statements, shows a certain offhand carelessness. But in general she followed the broader lines of truth, and knowing her extravagant attachment to Maria Carolina and her passion for a prominent part in every adventure, even when accompanied by peril, it is not impossible to make the two statements fit by assuming that Nelson, as she says in the letter to Greville, undertook to see the royal party through the secret passage, but that she, instead of awaiting them at the boats, persuaded Nelson to let her accompany him, and share every one of the thrilling moments. There can be little doubt that her presence at this distressing time would be comforting to Maria Carolina.

That Nelson himself anticipated some danger in the embarkation is shown by his secret orders to the squadron: the boats of the *Vanguard* and the *Alcmena* were to be armed with cutlasses, the launches with carronades, and the boats were to carry from four to half a dozen soldiers each, while in case assistance was wanted by Nelson on shore, "false fires will be burnt."

But these precautions, so wise under the circumstances, were, after all, not needed. The royal family and all their belongings were safely and without alarm rowed to the British flagship. But though they were all stowed on board by midnight of December the 21st, the *Vanguard* was not able to weigh anchor till seven o'clock on the evening of the 23rd. The two days' delay was caused by waiting for further consignments of treasure, and for the last of the refugees to fly to the ships before they up-anchored and sailed from the curving Bay of Naples—which Maria Carolina thought never to behold again. A favourable breeze had blown steadily from the 21st to the 23rd, but when the squadron sailed it was with a dropping barometer and every sign of threatening weather. The next day a tremendous storm struck them, and as Nelson, with his very considerable experience, said, "It blew harder than I ever experienced since I have been at sea."

Emma Hamilton was a good sailor, and when nearly all on board the *Vanguard*, with the exception of the regular ship's company, were prostrated with sea-sickness and fear, she kept up her spirit and her health, cheering, nursing, and waiting on everybody. In few of the varied and striking episodes of her life does she shine with a lustre so simple and unselfish. The royal children, deprived of their proper attendants,

frightened and miserable, clung to her reviving kindness, and their unhappy mother not less so. Nelson was recording the unadorned truth when he wrote to St. Vincent—

"It is my duty to tell your Lordship the obligations which the Royal Family as well as myself are under on this trying occasion to her Ladyship. They necessarily came on board without a bed, nor could the least preparation be made for their reception. Lady Hamilton provided her own beds, linen, etc., and became *their slave*, for except one man, no person belonging to Royalty assisted the Royal Family, nor did her Ladyship enter a bed the whole time they were on board."

The "poor wretched *Vanguard*," as Nelson once called her, seemed a special mark for storms and tempests. Nelson, it will be remembered had been nearly wrecked in her off San Pietro earlier in the year, and in this, the worst gale of his recollection, her sails were split to ribbons, and it seemed at one time as though the masts would have to be cut away. In these stark circumstances, with the terrified Neapolitans calling on every saint in the Catholic calendar, Emma proved herself made of the true heroic stuff. Fear is contagious, but she did not catch it; and Sir John Macpherson, writing to Sir William Hamilton after this voyage to Palermo, had reason to congratulate the British Ambassador on

AS "MIRANDA"

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having a wife "of so good a heart and so fine a mind." Lady Betty Foster, when writing to Lady Hamilton on the 8th of February, 1799, wished to express "the universal tribute of praise and admiration which is paid to the very great courage and feeling which you have shown on the late melancholy occasion."

But Lady Hamilton was not thinking of praise or admiration when, on the Christmas Day of 1798, Prince Albert, the youngest son of the King and Queen of Naples, yielded up his little spirit to the storm. The baby prince, she tells Greville, was "six years old, my favourite, taken with convulsions in the midst of the storm, and, at seven in the evening of Christmas day, expired in my arms, not a soul to help me, as the few women her Majesty brought on board were incapable of helping her or the poor royal children."

In the early morning of December 26th the *Vanguard* anchored at Palermo. The King landed publicly, with salutes and "every proper honour" paid to his barge. The Queen, heart-broken and prostrate over the death of her little son, would not land till later; and then she did so privately, accompanied by Nelson, who wrote: "Her Majesty being so much affected by the death of Prince Albert that she could not bear to go on shore in a public manner." Maria Carolina was miserable and depressed; and she got little

sympathy from the King, who was inclined to regard her English sympathies as the cause of their troubles. All Emma's generous ardours were roused for the unhappy Maria Carolina. She wrote to Greville shortly after the landing at Palermo—

"The Queen, whom I love better than any person in the world, is very unwell. We weep together, and now that is our onely comfort. Sir William and the King are philosophers; nothing affects them, thank God, and *we* are scolded even for shewing proper sensibility."

In the same letter it appears that the charms of Palermo, beautiful in her amphitheatre of mountains, with the two horns of the bay guarded by the threatening heights of Pellegrino to the north-west, and Zaffarano to the east, had little appeal for the exiles. Emma cries for "*dear, dear* Naples," and says, "we now dare not show our love for that place; for this country is jelous of the other." Sir William Hamilton also wrote to Greville from Palermo in a tone of great dissatisfaction: "I have been driven from my comfortable house at Naples," he says, "to a house here without chimneys, and calculated only for the summer." He complains that this is hard upon a man who feels himself growing old, and suffering as he does both from bilious and rheumatic complaints. "I am still most desirous of returning home by the first ship that Lord Nelson

sends down to Gibraltar, as I am worn out and want repose." Another cause of distress to the artistic and antiquarian Sir William was the enforced and hurried parting from the larger portion of his carefully collected treasures. In one of her letters his wife says, "We have left everything at Naples but the vases and best pictures. 3 houses elegantly furnished, all our horses and our 6 or 7 carriages, I think is enough for the vile French. For we cou'd not get our things off, not to betray the royal family." Some of the most valuable things in the collection, which had been packed to send to England were lost at sea in the *Colossus*. In later years, when appealing for a pension, Emma made some extravagant statements as to her own and her husband's losses: "When the many, I may say hair-breadth risks, we ran in our escapes are considered, it must be obvious that to cover and colour our proceedings we were compelled to abandon our houses and our valuables as they stood, without venturing to remove a single article. My own private property thus left, to effect this great purpose, was little if any short of £9,000, and Sir William's not less than £30,000, which sum, had he bequeathed, might naturally have been willed to me in whole or part." It is exceedingly unlikely that Emma's *private* property, which would consist principally of dresses and jewels, came anywhere near the sum she set down. She certainly saved a portion

of her things, and any loss she suffered was fully made up by the Queen's lavish generosity. As to Sir William, though he undoubtedly lost seriously in the *Colossus*, that was owing to the hand of accident, and not to voluntary abandonment in a "great purpose," as Emma, always emotional and inaccurate, claims.

Nelson and the Hamiltons shared a house at Palermo, Nelson paying fully his share of the expenses, for when they all returned to England together, in 1800, Sir William owed the admiral £2000. It was probably in thus setting up house together—*Tria juncta in uno*, as both Sir William and Emma were fond of calling their three-sided friendship—that the first faint breaths of scandal began to dim the shining mirror of Nelson's fame. No doubt Emma's fine conduct during the stormy passage from Naples to Palermo had made a considerable impression upon Nelson, who loved courage, especially when joined to such "feeling sensibility" and loveliness as Lady Hamilton's. In his letters of this time she is wreathed in many adjectives. "Our dear Lady Hamilton," he calls her in one of them, "whom to see is to admire, but, to know, are to be added honour and respect; her head and heart surpass her beauty, which cannot be equalled by anything I have seen." In his letters to his wife he praised the fascinating Emma with more warmth than wisdom. Some time before the

flight to Palermo Lady Nelson had shown signs of uneasiness, and expressed her wish to come out and join him. It is very plain that Nelson would have found her a burthen on his hands, for in rebuking her for the very natural suggestion he says, "You would by February have seen how unpleasant it would have been had you followed *any* advice which carried you from England to a wandering sailor. I could, if you had come, *only* have struck my flag, and carried you back again, for it would have been impossible to have set up an establishment at either Naples or Palermo."

It is a little difficult to see where the impossibility comes in. If he could set up house with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, why not with his own much more frugal and careful wife? But already he was slipping almost unconsciously into the toils—to his battle-wearied frame and craving heart the enchantment of Emma's sympathetic adoration was potent. On her side the enchantment she wielded was almost as unconscious as his yielding to it; nature gave her the spell, and it was as natural to her to use it as to breathe or smile.

From Palermo onwards may be traced a certain slackening of moral fibre in Nelson—he is no longer quite the same Nelson we have known. This is said with reserve and a recognition of its seriousness, but the fact remains. He is as lovable as ever, and more pitiable; as a

sea-officer his genius knows no dimming till his sun goes down in splendour off Cape Trafalgar; but as a man he is henceforth to know a moral struggle and a moral defeat to which he had hitherto been a stranger. Captain Mahan's verdict, if severe, is substantially just, and it is trifling with the truth to pretend otherwise. "The glory of the hero," he says, "brought a temptation which wrecked the happiness of the man. The loss of serenity, the dark evidences of inward conflict, of yielding against conviction, of consequent dissatisfaction with self and gradual deterioration, make between his past and future a break as clear as, and far sharper than, the startling increase of radiancy that attends the Battle of the Nile, and thenceforth shines with undiminished intensity to the end. The lustre of his well-deserved and worldwide renown, the consistency and ever-rising merit of his professional conduct, contrast painfully with the shadows of reprobation, the swerving, and the declension, which begin to attend a life heretofore conformed, in the general, to healthy normal standards of right and wrong."

Under the combined influence of Lady Hamilton and the Queen of Naples, Nelson consented to fetter himself with promises—a thing he would have scorned a year earlier—and in February, 1799, he wrote: "I have promised my flag shall not go out of the mole at Palermo

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From an engraving by J. Conde in the "European Magazine"

without the approbation of the Court, and that I never expect to get."

But it is clear, from his letters written during the early months at Palermo, that he suffered much conflict of spirit, which, as always, reacted on his bodily health. To Lady Parker he wrote, at the beginning of February—

"My health is such that without a great alteration, I will venture to say a very short space of time will send me to that bourne from whence none return; but God's will be done. After the Action I had nearly fell into a decline, but at Naples my invaluable friends Sir William and Lady Hamilton nursed and set me up again. I am worse than ever: my spirits have received such a shock that I think they cannot recover it, . . . but who can see what I have and be well in health? Kingdoms lost and a Royal Family in distress; but they are pleased to place confidence in me, and whilst I live and my services can be useful to them, I shall never leave this Country, although I know that nothing but the air of England, and peace and quietness, can perfectly restore me."

To Alexander Davison he wrote, at the end of the same month, in a still more melancholy strain—

"Believe me, my only wish is to sink with honour into the grave, and when that shall please God, I shall meet death with a smile.

Not that I am insensible to the honours and riches my King and Country have heaped upon me, so much more than any Officer could deserve; yet I am ready to quit this world of trouble, and envy none but those of the estate six feet by two."

But if Lady Hamilton and the feeling she aroused in his honourable heart were the real cause of all this inward conflict, owing to the irony of circumstances, it was to Lady Hamilton he turned for comfort in his depression. She was very skilful in comforting. And so the tangle grew, till nothing could cut the knot save flight from a dangerous atmosphere and an innocently dangerous woman—for there is nothing in Lady Hamilton's character to justify the belief that she deliberately set herself to entrap Nelson. But against the remedy of flight there was his promise to Maria Carolina that he would not desert her, as well as the Fourth Article of the Anglo-Sicilian Treaty, signed on the 1st of December, 1798, which promised that Great Britain should keep a naval force in the Mediterranean "decidedly superior to that of the enemy, in order to provide by this means for the safety of the dominions of his Sicilian Majesty." All through the unhappy business at Palermo his duty as a British admiral and his inclination as a man seemed to point the same way. That was the fatal attack in front and rear before which he eventually went down. But in later years, when her influence over him

was supreme and undoubted, Emma Hamilton used to boast that she had never turned him from his duty to his country; and certain it is, as any impartial student of his letters and despatches at this period must admit, that, far from idling away his time in an Armida-garden, Nelson was very fully occupied with his professional duties and the affairs of his country and of the Two Sicilies. The danger lay in the fact that Emma was so much mixed up in these things. She interpreted and translated and copied, not only for her husband, but for Nelson. Sir William told Greville that "Lord Nelson, for want of language and experiences of this court and country, without Emma and me would be at the greatest loss every moment." She claimed a part in big affairs; she was the "Patroness of the Navy," the ambassadress of the Queen, and later (at this time she was inclined to put Sicily first) the ardent upholder of English glory. She could not be ignored or put on one side. When Lady Nelson inquired as to the admiral's return, he told her, "If I have the happiness of seeing their Sicilian Majesties safe on the throne again, it is probable I shall still be home in the summer. Good Sir William, Lady Hamilton and myself are the mainsprings of the machine which manages what is going on in this country. We are all bound to England, when we can quit our posts with propriety." It is probable that quiet and retiring

Frances Nelson would be puzzled to account for Lady Hamilton as a "mainspring" in political matters. She had as yet no idea of the exuberant vitality of the British Minister's wife. At Palermo, as at Naples, Lady Hamilton was in the centre of the stage. Was it business and the fate of dynasties, Emma must be consulted; was it pleasure, no child there gayer than she; was it sickness, there was no nurse so kind. Nelson found her on every side. She could never have so won him had she been merely a beautiful woman, or merely a clever and capable one. It was the combination of her many qualities that stole away the heart of the great and simple admiral.

But susceptible as he was by nature to feminine influence and feminine charm, Nelson was not lightly turned from the paths of honourable and upright dealing between man and man, and man and woman, which he had followed all his life. Within a few months of seeing Emma constantly it is evident that she had made a tremendous impression upon him, that she had begun to cause him a certain uneasiness and unrest of conscience. But for a considerable period he took her enthusiastic friendship, which was as welcome to his parched spirit as water in the desert, as one of the gifts the gods provide. In the sunny atmosphere of Sicily, amid an easy and kindly people, stern questionings as

to the future seemed needless, and Nemesis far away.

So for a time neither Nelson nor Emma asked whither their growing admiration of each other, their growing desire for each other's presence, might be leading. Nelson might call her the "one rose" in a thorny and difficult situation, but for several months his thoughts and his time were far more taken up with the Neapolitan Jacobins, who were the thorns, than with the rose.

CHAPTER XI

THE JACOBIN RISING

MEANWHILE much had happened in Naples. When the Court fled on the 23rd of December, 1798, the King had left Prince Francesco Pignatelli as regent in his absence. This was a post that in the threatening aspect of the time needed a very strong man; but Prince Pignatelli was weak, drifting from one side to the other, a tool in the hands of the self-elected, self-styled "Patriots"—even as a tool not a sound one, but apt to break in the hands of those who used him. He made treacherous advances to France—he who had been left to guard Naples—and then, in fear at the consequences, deserted both the French and the Neapolitans, and fled to Sicily.

The Lazzaroni were loyal, and had no dealings with traitors; but with the Neapolitan government in the hands of the so-called "Patriots," and with the French in possession of the principal provincial fortresses, it was little they could do to oppose treachery within Naples and disciplined armies without. There were riots, seizure of

"patriot" arms, looting of the palaces of Jacobin nobles, but the end was inevitable. It must be remembered that throughout this Jacobin rising in Naples it was the upper classes, the educated and well-born, who were the Jacobins and "Patriots," who cultivated French sympathies, and combined fine sentiments with traitorous deeds and oppressions. Some of them were really under the glamour of the early stages of the French Revolution, for as Carlyle says, "How beautiful is noble-sentiment: like gossamer gauze, beautiful and cheap; which will stand no tear and wear! Beautiful cheap gossamer gauze, thou film-shadow of a raw material of Virtue, which art not woven, nor likely to be, into Duty; thou art better than nothing, and also worse!"

The Lazzaroni were not touched by "noble-sentiment;" they were loyal, conservative, fierce when roused, good-humoured when let alone, contented with their easy, coarse-grained monarch; superstitious, under the thumb of the Catholic Church, regarding "Jacobin" as a word synonymous with "atheist," and showing all the intolerant violence of an uneducated and priest-ridden people. But the faithfulness of the Lazzaroni to their Church and sovereign—a faithfulness not of words merely—stands out in admirable solidity amid the shifting sands of passion, greed, self-interest, and treachery, which marked the rest of the Neapolitans at the beginning of 1799.

But Lazzaroni loyalty did not hold the reins of government. In January Naples was surrendered to the French General Championnet; and after the fashion of the Directory, with the planting of trees of liberty, and much talking of "noble-sentiment," the Parthenopean Republic was proclaimed—so for a time the Bourbon rule in Naples came to an abrupt conclusion.

These events naturally caused much distress to the self-exiled King and Queen at Palermo. England and the British fleet seemed the only help and the only hope. "Our country," said Nelson to St. Vincent, "is looked to as a resource for all the difficulties of this." And Acton wrote to Nelson in his own curious English that "remedyes to oppose so many evils depend and will principally raise and be employed by the forces under your command on whose assistance his Majesty places all his hopes and comforts."

In view of the expected and promised aids from Austria and Russia, the measures taken for the recovery of Naples and the expulsion of the French were two—one by land, and one by sea. When the loyalty of the lower classes and the insecure foundations of the Parthenopean Republic were realized at Palermo, the King appointed Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo to raise an army among the peasants, and all who would fight on the royalist side. The choice was a good one, for Ruffo was a man of considerable force and ability,

LADY HAMILTON AS A "SIBYL"

GEORGE ROMNEY

owning great estates in Calabria, and great influence with the peasants of those estates, who, in themselves, as Mr. Gutteridge says in his invaluable "Nelson and the Neapolitan Jacobins," were "almost equal to an army." His influence, too, as a Cardinal of the Roman Church, was a very important consideration in raising the so-called "Christian Army"—an army which quickly attained formidable proportions, and in spite of its professed "Christian" character, was in many respects a ruffianly horde. But the Cardinal and his army were welcomed as deliverers by the people who flocked to his standard, and in spite of raggedness and lack of discipline, the "Christian Army" drove the French from the outlying provinces till the Parthenopean Republic was shrunk to the city of Naples itself. King Ferdinand had invested Ruffo with almost unlimited powers, telling him in his commission, "You may adopt to any extent all means which loyalty to religion, desire to save property, life, and family honour, or the policy of rewarding those who distinguish themselves, may suggest to you, as well as the severest punishments. . . . You may make any proclamations you may consider likely to bring about the end you have been ordered to attain."

Besides his official instructions Cardinal Ruffo, during the progress of his campaign, was constantly receiving letters of command and encouragement from both the King and Queen of

Naples. Emma Hamilton's admiration of the Queen was so indiscriminate and all-embracing that she could see nothing save the utmost grace and charm and tenderness in Maria Carolina—even her anger was always virtuous and admirable. But the Queen had another and darker side to her character; there was a marked strain of cruelty in her nature, her ambition stopped at nothing, and at times she was almost ferocious in her desire for vengeance. The violence of her passions is shown by some of her letters to Ruffo. "I wish to warn you about another matter," she tells him on the 5th of April, "Rebellious Naples and her ungrateful citizens may make no terms. Order is to be re-established in that monstrous city by rewarding the faithful and inflicting exemplary punishments on the wicked." In another and later letter she says, "I am full of admiration for the depth of your thoughts, and the wisdom of your maxims. I must nevertheless confess that I am not of your opinion as to the advisability of dissembling and forgetting, or even of giving rewards, for the purpose of winning over the chiefs of the rogues. I do not hold this view from any spirit of revenge; that is a passion which is unknown to me. If, through anger, I speak as if I were possessed by that spirit, I feel that I have in reality no vengeance in my heart, but that I am carried away by my great contempt and indifference for these scoundrels."

In spite of the disclaimer of any motives of revenge, it is an angry and passionate woman who speaks in those letters. The stupid, heavy Ferdinand had more generosity of feeling towards his rebellious subjects; he winds up a long epistle to Ruffo by saying, "It is my intention thereafter, in accordance with my duty as a good Christian, and the loving father of my people, to forget the past entirely, and to grant to all a full and general pardon, which will protect them all from any consequences of any past transgression. I shall also forbid any investigation, believing as I do that their acts are due, not to natural perversity, but to fear and cowardice."

While Ruffo and his army were marching about Southern Italy, Nelson and his ships had been fully engaged. Nelson, unfortunately fettered by promises, was himself unable to leave Palermo; but his was the guiding head and hand. "My public correspondence," he wrote, "besides the business of sixteen sail-of-the-line, and all our commerce, is with Petersburg, Constantinople, the Consul at Smyrna, Egypt, the Turkish and Russian admirals, Trieste, Vienna, Tuscany, Minorca, Earl St. Vincent, and Lord Spencer. This over, what time can I have for any private correspondence?" He had ordered the Portuguese squadron under his command to Messina to guard against the possible danger of a French invasion; to Ball he had entrusted the siege of Malta; and

when the time was ripe he sent Troubridge with a small squadron to blockade Naples. Thomas Troubridge played a considerable part in the anti-Jacobin crusade, and also later on had something to say as to Nelson's relations with Lady Hamilton. He was a very upright English gentleman, and so good a sea-officer that Nelson said of him, when he had the maddening misfortune to run his ship the *Culloden* on a shoal in Aboukir Bay just before the Battle of the Nile, "Captain Troubridge on shore is superior to captains afloat!" On another and later occasion he said, "Our friend Troubridge is as full of resources as his *Culloden* is full of accidents; but I am now satisfied, that if his ship's bottom were entirely out, he would find means to make her swim." That was one of Nelson's generous little exaggerations; but another admiral, one more given to sarcasm than praise, stern old St. Vincent himself, said of Troubridge, that he was "the ablest adviser and best executive officer in the British navy, with honour and courage as bright as his sword." Troubridge was imbued with all Nelson's hearty hatred of the French; to him, as to his admiral, the name of Jacobin was anathema, and he needed little pressing to bear in mind, as Nelson instructed him just before sailing, that "speedy reward and quick punishment is the foundation of good government."

The appearance of the ships under Troubridge

off Naples was a sign of hope to the loyalists and Lazzaroni, and a warning to the Jacobins that the days of the Parthenopean Republic were numbered. The islands of Ischia and Procida in the Bay were occupied in the name of the King of the Two Sicilies. The turn of the tide was soon visible. Troubridge wrote to Nelson—

"A person, just from Naples, tells me the Jacobins are pressing hard the French to remain; they begin to shake in their shoes. Those of the lower order now speak freely. The rascally nobles, tired of standing as common sentinels, and going the rounds, say, if they had known as much as they do now, they would have acted differently."

So much for "noble-sentiment"!

On the 22nd of April the French evacuated Naples, only leaving behind a garrison of five hundred men in the Castle of St. Elmo. In communicating these doings to Lord Spencer, Nelson said, "I am not in person in these busy scenes, more calculated for me than remaining here giving advice; but their Majesties think the advice of my incompetent judgment valuable at this moment, therefore I submit, and I can only say that I give it as an honest man, one without hopes or fears; therefore they get at the truth, which their Majesties have seldom heard."

But the month of May brought great news, and Nelson was released from distasteful coast-defence at Palermo—for distasteful it was, as his

letters of this time show, in spite of the glamour and the sunshine of Lady Hamilton's presence. Waiting about a Court was little to his liking, even when seasoned with ardent flatteries and attentions. But on the 12th day of May came the call to action, and Nelson was himself again. A brig arrived at Palermo with the news that a French fleet had been seen off Oporto, making for the Mediterranean. Rumour for once understated fact, for the first intelligence said nineteen sail-of-the-line, whereas it later proved to be twenty-five. Here was an emergency and a danger after Nelson's own heart, and he made all possible dispositions to meet it; but his fettering promise to the Queen of Naples still shackled his own actions. To St. Vincent he wrote, in great anxiety—

"Should you come upwards without a battle, I hope in that case you will afford me an opportunity of joining you; for my heart would break to be near my commander-in-chief, and not assisting him at such a time. What a state I am in! If I go, I risk, and more than risk, Sicily, and what is now safe on the Continent; for we know, from experience, that more depends on *opinion* than on acts themselves. As I stay, my heart is breaking; and, to mend the matter, I am seriously unwell."

Troubridge and his ships being summoned from Naples Bay, Captain Foote, who later signed

the articles of capitulation with the rebels which caused Nelson such trouble and vexation, was left behind as senior officer.

The safest way to guard the Two Sicilies was to look for the French at sea, and Nelson broke away from the nervous Court and decided to cruise off Maritimo with his squadron. From there he would cover Palermo, which he swore "should be protected to the last."

He was much missed by his two great friends, the British Ambassador and his wife. Sir William Hamilton wrote to him with a pleasant sincerity: "I can assure you that neither Emma nor I knew how much we loved you until this separation, and we are convinced your Lordship feels the same as we do."

On Nelson's side the feeling was certainly not less; indeed, for one of his two friends it was already much more warm than wise. He wrote to her on the 19th of May—

"To tell you how dreary and uncomfortable the *Vanguard* appears, is only telling you what it is to go from the pleasantest society to a solitary cell, or from the dearest friends to no friends. I am now perfectly the *great man*—not a creature near me. From my heart I wish myself the little man again! You and good Sir William have spoiled me for any place but with you. I love Mrs. Cadogan. You cannot conceive what feel when I call you all to my remembrance."

Alas! poor Nelson! He was rapidly nearing the point where one face and one voice could alone content him—and that face and voice fenced off from his need by a double debt of honour, she a wife and he a husband. See the change, too, in his temper. A year ago he had not written of the cabin of his flagship as a "solitary cell;" a year ago he did not speak of himself at sea as having "no friends," but said that he was surrounded by a "band of brothers."

But now the thought of Emma was becoming entangled with all his actions, and even when watching for the French fleet he had to stop and draw up a codicil to his will—as he was to do on the last day of his life six years later. "I give and bequeath," he said in this first codicil, "to my dear friend, Emma Hamilton, wife of the Right Hon. Sir William Hamilton, a nearly round box set with diamonds, said to have been sent me by the mother of the Grand Signor, which I request she will accept (and never part from) as a token of regard and respect for her very eminent virtues (for she, the said Emma Hamilton, possesses them all to such a degree that it would be doing her injustice was any particular one to be mentioned) from her faithful and affectionate friend."

Nelson was disappointed of the French fleet. Rumour flew along the Italian coast telling many tales—the French were coming to Naples, to

AS "CASSANDRA"

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Alexandria, they had gone to Toulon, or had effected a junction with the Spanish ships. Nelson returned to Palermo at the end of May, and a few days later he was joined by Duckworth with welcome reinforcements, and he then shifted his flag from the hardly seaworthy old *Vanguard* to the *Foudroyant*—the very ship he was to have had when he re-entered the Mediterranean in the spring of 1798. News came that Lord St. Vincent, the commander-in-chief who understood him, intended to return home. "If you are sick," Nelson wrote him, "I will fag for you, and our dear Lady Hamilton will nurse you with the most affectionate attention."

The time, like all times of uncertainty, was full of tongues, each telling a different tale—real news mingled inextricably with baseless rumour. Conflicting issues were rendered yet more confused by the fact that Maria Carolina suddenly turned round, and from having begged Nelson to remain with her at Palermo entreated him to go to Naples. A letter of Lady Hamilton's to Nelson, dated June 12th, gives some explanation:—

"I have been with the Queen this evening. She is very miserable, and says, that although the people of Naples are for them in general, yet things will not be brought to that state of quietness and subordination till the Fleet of Lord Nelson appears *off Naples*. She therefore begs, intreats, and conjures you, my dear Lord, if it is

possible, to arrange matters so as to be able to go to Naples. Sir William is writing for General Acton's *answer*. For God's sake consider it, and do! We will go with you, if you will come and fetch us. Sir William is ill; I am ill: it will do us good."

Neither the entreaties of the Queen nor the illness of Sir William and herself were sufficient cause for undertaking the expedition; but Emma was always given to seeing things through the personal medium. Her own wishes, or—just as frequently—the wishes of those she loved became transmuted by some subtle alchemy into political reasons! But when dealing with the emotional Emma, the astute Queen adopted the reverse method, and presented her political schemes under the guise of personal desires. It is true that Maria Carolina was passionate and impulsive, and her passions sometimes got the better of her schemes, but in general her head ruled her heart quite successfully.

In this matter, for once, the King and Queen of Naples were united, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that they both used Nelson to accomplish their own ends, irrespective of his country's. They were to remain in security at Palermo while he thoroughly cleared Naples of rebels—and a very dirty business it was to prove, in which a name that outshone all the royalties of Europe was to get unfairly smirched. Nelson,

who was usually so quick to condemn any symptom of cowardice, seems to have been curiously blind to the unheroic conduct of the Sicilian sovereigns.

Perhaps to cover his own conduct, the King sent his son to the flagship and gave Nelson most extensive powers. The fourth article of the Instructions runs: "All the military and political operations shall be agreed upon by the Prince Royal and Admiral Lord Nelson. The opinion of this latter always to have a preponderance, on account of the respect due to his experience, as well as to the forces under his command, which will determine the operations, and also because we are so deeply indebted to him for the zeal and attachment of which he has given so many proofs."

Nelson sailed from Palermo for Naples on the 13th of June; but when off Maritimo he heard definitely that the French fleet had left Toulon and was bound southwards, so he returned to Palermo to await Ball's and Duckworth's reinforcements. The Queen was much disappointed to see him again so soon. Writing to Ruffo on the 14th she says—

"The ill-luck which never deserts us has obliged the English squadron to return this morning to Palermo. It started yesterday with the finest wind possible. We said good-bye about eleven, when it was already under sail,

and at five o'clock the squadron was out of sight. The wind was so propitious, that it would have been at Procida to-day; but it met two English ships halfway, coming as reinforcements, inasmuch as the French squadron had left Toulon and was approaching the southern shores of Italy. A council of war was held, and Nelson decided that his duty was to think in the first place of Sicily, then, getting rid of the passengers, troops, and artillery which he had on board, to hasten to meet and to seek to beat the enemy. They returned with this intention. I can hardly tell you how grieved I was at this disappointment. The squadron was superb, beautiful, imposing."

To Emma the Queen wrote on the same day—

"My dear Milady,—I am going to the Colli to take Francis to visit his father, and to give him an account of everything. I was exceedingly surprised to see the squadron return, though I felt sure that under the leadership of Lord Nelson it could only be on good grounds. I am sure to return at sunset, and I hope to have the consolation of seeing you and assuring you of my constant friendship. I am grieved at the news concerning your health. A thousand compliments to the chevalier, and to our brave and virtuous Admiral, from whom I expect great things."

A few days later Nelson learned that Cardinal

Ruffo—the Eminence whom Maria Carolina so flattered in her letters—had actually concluded an armistice with the Neapolitan rebels. As he held no powers to treat with the rebels, indeed had been expressly instructed not to do so, this behaviour wore a distinctly suspicious air. Nelson and the Hamiltons had always entertained doubts of Ruffo, and this piece of news, combined with the Jacobin taunt that he had returned to Palermo for fear of the French fleet—for Nelson was almost absurdly sensitive in regard to his professional honour, even when he had placed it at a height above the reach of mortal malice—decided him to make sail at once for Naples. Sir William and Lady Hamilton went with him in the *Foudroyant*. It may be imagined that Emma was eager to be with the admiral in the British flagship, in the very thick of stirring events, and it is evident that he did not oppose the wish—indeed, he had written to her a few days earlier—

"It gave me great pain to hear both Sir William and yourself were so very unwell. I wrote to Sir William yesterday that if you both thought the sea air would do you good, I have plenty of room. I can make for you private apartments, and I give you my honour the sea is so smooth that no glass was smoother."

Evidently his promise of fair weather was fulfilled, for Sir William Hamilton wrote to Acton, when off Ustica, on the 22nd of June—

"We are stealing on with light winds, and it is very pleasant, and our admirals and captains are impatient to serve his Sicilian Majesty and save his capital from destruction. I believe the business will be soon done when the fleet appears in the Bay of Naples."

But when the *Foudroyant* sailed into the Bay Nelson saw the white flag of truce flying from the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, where the Neapolitan Jacobins had betaken themselves, and the same flag flying on board the *Seahorse* frigate, Captain James Foote. Captain Foote was the senior British officer left behind by Troubridge, and on the very day before Nelson's arrival he and Cardinal Ruffo had signed a treaty of capitulation with the rebels, granting them all the honours of war. On learning these facts Nelson acted with his usual promptitude. Armed as he was with powers from the King of Naples beyond any that had been granted to Ruffo, he at once signalled to annul the treaty, which he declared with vehement vexation was "infamous." He considered, with the practical justice of a seaman, "that the arrival of the British fleet has completely destroyed the compact, as would that of the French if they had the power (which, thank God, they have not) to come to Naples." He was willing to grant terms to the French garrison in the castle of St. Elmo, if they would surrender the stronghold within two hours of being summoned,

for he regarded them simply in the light of ordinary enemies; being French they owed no allegiance to the Sicilian sovereigns, and were not traitors like the Neapolitan garrisons of Uovo and Nuovo. To them he sent a brief and stern notification that Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson "will not permit them to embark or quit those places. They must surrender themselves to his Majesty's royal mercy."

Ruffo opposed Nelson and resented his superior powers. Nelson wrote to Rear-Admiral Duckworth on the 25th of June: "As you will believe, the cardinal and myself have begun our career by a complete difference of opinion. He will send the rebels to Toulon: I say they shall not go." Sir William Hamilton was in entire agreement with Nelson: writing to Acton the very day that the *Foudroyant* reached Naples Bay, he spoke of the treaty granted by Ruffo as "shameful," and referred to the armistice of twenty days—which was demanded by the rebels in hope of the appearance of the French fleet—as being absolutely annulled by the mere appearance of the British squadron. Nelson also, it will be remembered, makes this point.

The day after the arrival of the *Foudroyant*, the 25th of June, Ruffo came on board to confer with the admiral. Sir William Hamilton was present at the interview, as well as Lady Hamilton, who was very useful both to her husband

and to Nelson in interpreting and taking notes. The meeting was stormy and protracted: the cardinal was obstinate, and the admiral not to be moved—for there was iron as well as fire in Nelson. Sir William wrote to Acton after a second interview between the two, that "A little of my phlegm was necessary between the cardinal and Lord Nelson, or all would have been up the very first day, and the cardinal has written to thank me and Lady Hamilton."

Emma was gloriously in the midst of everything—the confidante of a queen, the friend of the greatest seaman of his time. In one of his letters to Acton, Sir William Hamilton writes: "As Lord Nelson is now telling Lady Hamilton what he wishes to say to the queen, you will probably know from the queen more than I do of Lord Nelson's intentions." It would be possible to read into this a hint of pique, were it not for the easy-going nature and unjealous temperament of the British Ambassador, who admired Nelson almost as fervently as did his wife. Emma was in daily communication with Maria Carolina, and the Queen, on her side, wrote constantly and at length. On the 25th of June she writes from Palermo that she has just received Emma's letter, and is sending back the same boat with her reply, wishing "it had wings to reach you sooner." Then she sets forth with considerable precision her ideas as to the treatment of the rebels—she

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is all for justice untempered with mercy: "To treat with such villainous rebels is impossible—it must be put an end to. The sight of the brave English squadron is my hope. . . . The rebel patriots must lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion to the pleasure of the king. Then, in my opinion, an example should be made of some of the leaders of the representatives, and the others should be transported under pain of death if they return into the dominions of the king." There were many women mixed up in the insurrection and shut up in the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, but this Spartan Queen had no special feeling for her own sex: "The females who have distinguished themselves in the revolution to be treated in the same way, and that without pity." She says these things are "not pleasant, but absolutely necessary," and goes on, "Finally, my dear Lady, I recommend Lord Nelson to treat Naples as if it were an Irish town in rebellion similarly placed. . . . I recommend to you, therefore, my dear lady, the greatest firmness, vigour, and severity; our future tranquillity and position depend upon it—the faithful people desire it. I solicit frequent news from you, for you cannot conceive the anxiety I feel, and believe me for life your most tenderly attached and grateful friend."

The Queen's temper is sufficiently shown in these extracts from her letter to Emma; but in

the British Museum there are her notes on the treaty of capitulation with the Neapolitan Jacobins, signed by Ruffo and Captain Foote, before Nelson reached Naples. Her overwrought feelings express themselves in marginal notes opposite the articles of the treaty. To Article One she writes in a kind of breathless rage, "To capitulate with one's rebel subjects, who were without force, without hope of succour either by sea or land! With persons who, after the clemency displayed to them by their king and their father (who promised to pardon them), fought desperately, and are now only brought to terms by fear! I feel it to be dishonourable to treat with rebels! They ought either to have been attacked in full force, or else left alone till a more favourable opportunity presented itself." Article Two is "a real insult; the rebels address their sovereign on equal terms, and with an air of being his superiors." The Third Article is "so infamous and absurd that it revolts me even to speak of it." She considers the Tenth Article "the culmination of disgrace," and at the foot of the capitulation writes her final exclamation of rage: "This is such an infamous treaty that if by a miracle of Providence some event does not take place which will break and destroy it, I look upon myself as lost and dishonoured. . . ."

But while the Queen stormed in her palace at Palermo, Nelson was acting the part of the

"miracle of Providence." He too considered the treaty "infamous," and, in spite of Ruffo, insisted that it should be annulled. As the result of his determination, the garrisons of Uovo and Nuovo surrendered unconditionally on the 26th of June—the second day after the British flagship and squadron sailed into the Bay of Naples. By this act Nelson brought down a storm of obloquy on his own head. Both during his lifetime and after his death he has been accused of conduct impossible to him of all men. Southey's denunciation is famous: he calls Nelson's treatment of the Jacobin rebels "A deplorable transaction! a stain upon the memory of Nelson and the honour of England! To palliate it would be in vain; to justify it would be wicked: there is no alternative . . . but to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and shame."

But, as Professor Knox Laughton says, with magnificent decisiveness and point, "Southey is wrong. There is another alternative. We neither palliate, nor justify, nor record: we deny. The story is a base and venomous falsehood."

As this is a matter that concerns Nelson's professional career, and does not specially affect Emma Hamilton, it is not necessary to go into the lengthy documents bearing upon the question as to whether Nelson was guilty of treacherous conduct to the rebel garrisons. Professor Laughton's denial is emphatic, and in itself will be

sufficient for most students of naval history. Without wandering into a labyrinth of controversy, it is enough for the purpose of the present narrative to say that Nelson had full powers to annul a treaty which Ruffo and Foote had really no authority to make. The rebels in the castles of Uovo and Nuovo were informed that the treaty was annulled, and as it had not begun to take effect, they were not caught unfairly or trapped into a position of military disadvantage; it was simply a restoration of the *status quo* thirty-six hours before Nelson's arrival in the Bay. By all the laws and usages of war traitors and spies are not entitled to the same treatment as the ordinary man under arms, and with them Nelson would not parley or grant terms; he would accept nothing save unconditional surrender. Of course by so doing he became hated by all the Jacobins of Europe: the facts were darkened to the blackest possible aspect; and it was upon this tissue of misrepresentation that good and patriotic Southey felt compelled to censure the great admiral he admired. But it was not by any public and professional act during the whole of his career as a seaman that Nelson laid himself open to the tongue of the scorner. Achilles had only one vulnerable spot.

In Nelson's conduct at this time it may be admitted that there is a distinct trace of something like fanaticism. To him it was a sacred

crusade to crush the French and all who were tainted by Jacobin ideas. In this age we cannot realize the brooding terror that hung over Europe —to each king and kingdom French armies and French watchwords stood for "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." We now see the new freedom of man that struggled to the light amid the horrors of the Revolution, and through the democratic and military tyranny that followed. To us Ferdinand is not an admirable monarch; to us there is something pitiable in the shivering remnant of the Neapolitan Jacobins who marched out of the surrendered castles of Nuovo and Uovo. But Nelson, so near to these events, saw them with very different eyes from ours. The whole of his life goes to prove that, fighter though he was, he was not a cruel or vindictive man; indeed, there never lived a more perfect example of the "Happy Warrior"—

> "Who, doomed to go in company with pain,
> And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
> Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
> In face of these doth exercise a power
> Which is our human nature's highest dower;
> Controles them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
> Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
> By objects, which might force the soul to abate
> Her feeling, rendered more compassionate."

But though compassion was as essential a part of his nature as courage, there was also an iron sternness, a fiery wrath for traitors, deserters, and

cowards. That his conduct in the Bay of Naples made a somewhat terrifying impression upon the Neapolitan populace, rejoiced though they were to see him, is shown by the diary of one De Nicola, who, after writing on the 25th of June that "The English squadron is drawn up facing our harbour, and offers an attractive and magnificent spectacle," reports, on the 29th, "They say the English admiral was in a rage because rebels had been allowed to capitulate when no quarter should have been given them;" while another rumour runs: "That the English admiral has threatened to cut off the prisoners' heads if St. Elmo resists and molests the city." What a glorious opportunity for censurers of Nelson, had that melodramatic rumour been true!

But there was one head Nelson held most completely forfeit, and that was Caracciolo's. Prince Francesco Caracciolo was an admiral—had been chief of the Neapolitan navy—and was a traitor. All the stern teachings of discipline—and it was no long time since Admiral Byng had been shot "to encourage the others," as Voltaire expressed it—caused Nelson to look upon Caracciolo's crime as beyond the bounds of mercy. Caracciolo had accompanied the royal family in their flight to Palermo six months before, he had been honoured and trusted, and when he besought the King's permission to return to Naples to safeguard his own property, it had been freely granted

him. Once among the Republicans, however, he had gone over to their side, taking it to be the winning side. He had aided the French and fought with them, actually going to the length of firing upon his own flagship, *La Minerva*. But the tide turned with the coming of the British squadron: he fled to the mountains, was captured, and brought on board the *Foudroyant*, to meet the stern, accusing eyes of Nelson and Troubridge. In the attempt to rouse undue pity for his fate, Caracciolo has been represented, by a curious inversion of the figures, as a trembling old man of seventy-four; in reality he was forty-seven or forty-eight. But though barely middle-aged, his was already a broken life—broken and ruined by his own act. The relentless hand of Nemesis was upon him as he stood on the deck of the British flagship.

Nelson summoned a court-martial of Neapolitan officers to assemble on board the *Foudroyant* for the purpose of trying Caracciolo, who "stands accused of rebellion against his lawful sovereign, and for firing at his colours hoisted on board his frigate, the *Minerva*." The charge was clear and definite; the only defence Caracciolo attempted was not to deny his own actions (which were not matters of controversy, but of fact), but to attack the character of the Neapolitan King for running away from Naples. Within two hours the verdict of the Neapolitan court-martial was

given, and then it became Nelson's stern duty to order the business to its end. To Commodore Count Thurn, who had been president of the court-martial, he wrote—

"Whereas a board of naval officers of his Sicilian Majesty hath been assembled to try Francisco Caracciolo for rebellion against his lawful sovereign, and for firing at his Sicilian Majesty's frigate *La Minerva;*

"And whereas the said board of naval officers have found the charge of rebellion fully proved against him, and have sentenced the said Caracciolo to suffer death;

"You are hereby required and directed to cause the said sentence of death to be carried into execution upon the said Francisco Caracciolo accordingly, by hanging him at the fore yard-arm of his Sicilian Majesty's frigate *La Minerva,* under your command, at five o'clock this evening; and to cause him to hang there until sunset, when you will have his body cut down, and thrown into the sea.

"Given on board the *Foudroyant,* Naples Bay, 29 June, 1799.

"NELSON"

Such was the stern but most justly deserved sentence. A good deal has been made of what is called Nelson's vindictive haste in causing

Caracciolo to be sentenced and executed on the same day. But it must be remembered that in time of war things are hastier and harsher than in time of peace—and it was dangerous to dally with traitors. It was not merely the sentence, but its swiftness, that struck terror, and deterred others from following in Caracciolo's footsteps. And Nelson had been brought up in the school of Earl St. Vincent, who would hang mutineers on a Sunday morning if they were sentenced on Saturday night.

During all this tragic business Emma Hamilton was shut up in her cabin in the *Foudroyant*—her steady nerve and her warm heart alike somewhat shaken by the downfall of the man she had known in the happier days of the Neapolitan Court. On the day of the execution she wrote three letters to Maria Carolina, which must have expressed, instead of the unnatural exultation with which she has been credited, grief and distress of mind, for the Queen in her reply speaks of the "sad and well-merited end of the unhappy and demented Caracciolo. I can truly sympathize with your excellent heart in all its sufferings, and that increases my gratitude." Yet it is in this very matter that Emma has been accused of conduct that would be a disgrace to the name of womanhood. Writer after writer, copying calumny from each other's pages, has declared that she was at Caracciolo's execution, delighting in the cruel

spectacle, and that when he was still hanging from the *Minerva's* yard-arm she actually said to Nelson, "Come, Bronte, let us take the barge and have another look at poor Caracciolo!"

Such stories are wicked inventions, and bear in themselves the evidence of their untruth. Even putting aside the fact that they are utterly out of character, Emma could not have been at the execution in the *Minerva*, for at the very time that the signal gun announced the end of the Neapolitan admiral, Lord Northwick was dining with Nelson and Sir William and Lady Hamilton on board the *Foudroyant*. The story about having "another look" is obviously maliciously made up by some one imperfectly conversant with the most obvious facts: Emma could not—unless gifted with prophetic foresight—address as "Bronte" a man upon whom the title was not then bestowed. These "artists in calumny," as Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson calls them, should be a little more careful of the groundwork of their ugly stories.

Soon after the execution of Caracciolo the King came back to Naples, and was received with acclamations and salutes—the Bourbon monarchy was restored again. But not trusting overmuch to the attachment of his loyal subjects, Ferdinand took up his quarters in the *Foudroyant*. For reasons of state, and for smaller reasons of pique and vexation, the Queen was left at Palermo—at this time she was unpopular both with her people

and with her husband. Writing to Lady Hamilton just before the King left Palermo, she says—

"I shall remain behind in great sadness, praying to heaven that all may end gloriously and for the best; but I am deeply affected, and am counting on what must justly take place. It is at this moment especially, my dear lady, that I rely on your friendship to write to me about everything, for all my correspondents, seeing my insignificance and dreading to compromise themselves, are sure to be silent. But I hope my good friend Emma will not forget me, though I am relegated to Palermo. This is going to be an epoch in my life; do not believe that I did not wish to come for any reason or through caprice. I have been obliged to do so on many grounds—besides which no one wanted me."

We may be sure that Emma responded generously, not to say extravagantly, to the Queen's declaration of trust and affection. It was a great part she was playing, and she was conscious of it every moment. Sir William himself was far from blind to the political importance of his wife's friendship with the Queen, and from the *Foudroyant* on the 14th of July he wrote to Lord Grenville, enclosing a packet of Maria Carolina's letters, and saying—

"As Lady Hamilton was very particularly requested by the Queen of Naples to accompany me and Lord Nelson on this expedition,

and was charged by her Majesty with many important commissions at Naples, and to keep up a regular daily correspondence with her Majesty, I have found the enclosed queen's letters to Lady Hamilton so very interesting, doing so much honour to the queen's understanding and heart, and throwing such clear light on the present situation of affairs at Naples, that I have prevailed on my wife to allow me to entrust to your Lordship the most interesting of her Majesty's letters, but not without a solemn promise from me that they should be restored to her by your Lordship on our arrival in England."

In a letter of the same date to his nephew, Charles Greville, Sir William speaks of the idea that they may soon come home—

"Probably some ships will soon be sent home from Palermo, and Emma and I shall profit of one. Every captain wishes to serve us, and no one are, I believe, more popular in the navy at this moment than Emma and I. It will be a heartbreaking to the Queen of Naples when we go; she has really no female friend but her, and Emma has been of infinite use in our late very critical business. Lord Nelson and I could not have done without her, all of which shall be explained when we meet. You cannot conceive the joy of Naples on seeing me arrive again, and we have had the glory of

"SENSIBILITY"
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stepping between the king and his subjects, to the utility of both. In short, the king's fleet and a little good management and temper has placed their Sicilian Majesties once more on their throne of Naples."

As he read this letter the Honourable Charles Greville must have reflected somewhat curiously on the progress of the "fair tea-maker of Edgware Row."

She herself was much elated at her part in events, and a few days later wrote him one of her long epistles, which still shows the old childish pleasure at her own importance—it needed more than war, bombardments, executions, endless exertions, and mental unrest to take the freshness and the zest out of Emma Hamilton! She tells Greville, "Everything goes on well here. We have got Naples, all the Forts; and to-night our troops go to Capua. His Majesty is with *us* on board, were he holds his Councils and Levées every day. . . . The King has bought his experience most dearly, but at last he knows his friends from his enemies, and allso knows the defects of his former government, and is determined to remedy them. For he has great good sense, and his misfortunes have made him steady and look into himself. The Queen is not yet come. She sent me as her Deputy; for I am very popular, speak the Neapolitan language, and considered, with Sir William, the friend of

the people. The Queen is waiting at Palermo, and she has determined, as there has been a great outcry against her, not to risk coming with the King."

Then she goes on to inform Greville how active she had been on the Queen's behalf, though she had been on shore but once, when she went to St. Elmo "to see the effect of the bombs! I saw at a distance our despoiled house in town, and Villa Emma, that have been plundered. Sir William's new appartment,—a bomb burst in it! But it made me so low-spirited, I don't desire to go again." She describes all she did before the King's arrival: "I had privily seen all the Loyal party, and having the head of the Lazzaronys an old friend, he came in the night of our arrival, and told me he had 90 thousand Lazeronis ready, at the holding up of his finger, but only twenty with arms. Lord Nelson, to whom I enterpreted, got a large supply of arms for the rest, and they were deposited with this man. . . . I have thro' him made 'the Queen's party,' and the people have prayed for her to come back, and she is now very popular. I send her every night a messenger to Palermo, with all the news and letters, and she gives me the orders the same. I have given audiences to those of her party, and settled matters between the nobility and Her Majesty. She is not to see on her arrival any

of her former evil counsellors, nor the women of fashion, alltho' Ladys of the Bedchamber, formerly her friends and companions, who did her dishonour by their desolute life. *All, all* is changed. She has been very *unfortunate;* but she is a good woman, and has sense enough to profit by her *past unhappiness*, and will make for the future *amende honorable* for the past. In short, if I can judge, it may turn out fortunate that the Neapolitans have had a dose of Republicanism. But what a glory to our good King, to our Country, that *we*—our brave fleet, our great Nelson—have had the happiness of restoring the King to his throne, to the Neapolitans their much-loved King, and been the instrument of giving a future good and just government to the Neapolitans! . . . We shall, as soon as the government is fixed, return to Palermo, and bring back the Royal family; for I foresee not any permanent government till that event takes place. Nor wou'd it be politick, after all the hospitality the King and Queen received at Palermo, to carry them off in a hurry. So you see there is great management required." Then she declares, "I am quite worn out. For I am interpreter to Lord Nelson, the King and Queen; and altogether feil quite shattered; but as things go well, that keeps me up." She says that Nelson is wonderful, "he is here and there and everywhere. I never saw such zeal and activity in any

one as in this wonderful man. My dearest Sir William, thank God, is well and of the greatest use now to the King. We hope Capua will fall in a few days, and then we will be able to return to Palermo. On Sunday last we had prayers on board. The King assisted, and was much pleased with the order, decency, and good behaviour of the men, the officers, etc."

The officers and men of the *Foudroyant* were themselves "much pleased" at having the beautiful Lady Hamilton on board. Lieutenant Parsons, who was Nelson's signal-midshipman at this time, records in his "Reminiscences" that "She was much liked by every one in the fleet, except Captain Nesbit, Lady Nelson's son; and her recommendation was the sure road to promotion. The fascination of her elegant manners was irresistible, and her voice most melodious. Bending her graceful form over her superb harp, on the *Foudroyant's* quarterdeck each day after dinner, in Naples' Bay, she sang the praises of Nelson, at which the hero blushed like a fair maiden listening to the first compliment paid to her beauty."

Emma's grace and ardour may be believed, but we have doubts about Nelson's blushes! Lieutenant Parsons was much affected by the stilted sentimentality of his time, and can hardly refer to a woman without calling her "a virtuous and lovely female," or "one of the fair sex," or

some other roundabout and hackneyed expression. But he had also a sense of humour, and gives a very delicious little dialogue between Lady Hamilton and a seaman of the *Foudroyant.* "The men," he says, "when threatened with punishment for misconduct, applied to Lady Hamilton, and her kindness of disposition, and Lord Nelson's known aversion to flogging, generally rendered the appeal successful. As an instance of which, one of his bargemen addressed her, in my hearing—

"'Please your ladyship's honour, I have got into a bit of a scrawl.'

"'What is the nature of it?' said she, with great affability.

"'Why, you see, your ladyship's honour, I am reported drunk when on duty yesterday, to the captain, and he will touch me up unless your ladyship's honour interferes. I was not as sober as a judge, because, as why, I was freshish; but I was not drunk.'

"'A nice distinction! Let me know what you had drunk.'

"'Why, you see, my lady, I was sent ashore after the dinner-grog; and who should I see, on landing, but Tom Mason, from the *Lion;* and Tom says to me, says he, "Jack, let us board this here wine-shop;" so after we had drunk a jug, and was making sail for the barge, as steady as an old pump-bolt, in comes Ned, funny Ned—

your ladyship's honour recollects Ned, who dances the hornpipe before the king. "My eyes, Jack!" says he; "but we will have another jug, and I'll stand treat," says he; so, you see, wishing to be agreeable like, I takes my share, and the boat waited for me. "You drunken rascal!" says Mr. St. Ives, the middy, to me, "but I'll report you." So I touches my hat, quite genteel like, which shows I was not drunk, and pulls on board without catching crabs; and if your ladyship's honour will tell the admiral that I pulled on board without catching crabs, he will see with half an eye that I only shook a cloth in the wind.'

"'Your name,' said 'Fair Emma,' taking out her tablets.

"'Jack Jones; and God bless that handsome face, for it is the sailor's friend.'

"And Jack, hitching up his trousers, gave a scrape with his foot, and bounded off with a light heart, well knowing the powerful influence he had moved in his favour."

No wonder the many-sided Emma was always in demand during the weeks she spent on board the *Foudroyant!* She was never at a loss, never anything but kind and willing, whether it were to intercede for a seaman in danger of the lash, to interpret for the British Ambassador, to amuse the King—though in a little outburst to Greville she says, "We have had the King on board a month, and I have never been able to go once on shore.

LADY HAMILTON

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Do you not call that slavery?"—or to soothe and make much of Nelson. At this time Nelson was fretful and uneasy over orders he had received from Lord Keith to quit Sicily and go to Minorca —orders he was determined to disobey, for, as he boldly told his new commander-in-chief, "I have no scruple in deciding that it is better to save the kingdom of Naples and risk Minorca, than to risk the kingdom of Naples to save Minorca."

The first anniversary of the Battle of the Nile was brilliantly celebrated on board the *Foudroyant* —the King proposed the hero's health, the fleet was illuminated, and it may well be imagined with what ardour the radiant Emma would drink the toast and smile upon the admiral who had already fallen too much under the spell she wielded. It was dangerous for the simple-hearted Nelson to celebrate Egyptian victories with this new "serpent of old Nile."

On the 5th of August Emma wrote to Greville, telling him that "the kingdom of Naples is clear. Gaeta and Capua have capitulated, and we sail to-night for Palermo, having been here seven weeks. . . . We return with a kingdom to present to my much-loved Queen. I have allso been so happy to succeed in all my company and every-thing I was charged with." Then with her usual naïve directness she informs him that the Queen had been often to see her mother left at Palermo, "and told her she ought

to be proud of her glorious daughter that has done so much in these last suffering months. There is great preparations for our return. The Queen comes out with all Palermo to meet us. A landing-place is made,—balls, suppers, illuminations, all ready. The Queen has prepared my cloathes—in short, if I have fag'd, I am more than repaid."

On the 8th of August the *Foudroyant* brought Nelson and the Hamiltons back to Palermo.

CHAPTER XII

FAREWELL TO ITALY

THERE was a Southern light-heartedness about the Sicilian Court which seemed to reck little of days past or days to come, so long as the present was bright with festivals. A kingdom had been lost with many circumstances of disgrace; a kingdom had been regained with many circumstances of horror, bloodshed, and violent punishments; yet so soon as the reign of terror was over, the Court, with a somewhat hysteric joy, turned its whole attention to illuminations and *fêtes*.

Lady Hamilton has already spoken of the preparations made by the Queen to greet the triumphant return from Naples of the King, the Admiral, and herself—for Sir William is somewhat overshadowed, his slow eclipse had already begun. Maria Carolina could not lavish enough upon Emma, who had been so invaluable a friend to exiled royalty. She gave her rich and costly dresses to replace those that had been lost; she put round her neck a chain of gold bearing her own miniature set with diamonds in the

jewelled words "Eterna Gratitudine." And while his wife showered gifts upon her "dear Milady," the King pressed favours on Nelson's more reluctant acceptance. Even when sending him a sword which had descended to him from his father, Ferdinand had to urge that it was a mark of gratitude "which cannot hurt your elevated and just delicacy." A more substantial sign of his immense obligations to the admiral was the gift of the Dukedom and revenues of Bronte. Lady Hamilton, who herself thought so much of titles, had the pleasure of informing Nelson of the King's intention on the second day after their return to Palermo. It is said the King had himself spoken of it earlier, and that Nelson had begged to decline the royal gift, whereupon Ferdinand asked him, "Lord Nelson, do you wish that your name alone should pass with glory to posterity, and that I should appear ungrateful?"

Nelson was always readier to render services than to receive material rewards, and he was fully justified in his proud boast to Alexander Davison at this time: "I might have before received money and jewels, but I rejected them, as became me, and never received one farthing for all the expenses of the Royal Family on board the *Vanguard* and *Foudroyant*. This I expect from the Board of Admiralty, and that they will order me a suitable sum. It has been

honour, and not money which I have sought, nor sought in vain."

At this time Palermo was all *fêtes* and flattery; but Nelson wrote to Rear-Admiral Duckworth on the 16th of August: "We are dying with heat, and the feast of Santa Rosalia begins this day: how shall we get through it?" Even Lady Hamilton had drooped: "Our dear Lady has been very unwell, and if this *fête* to-night do not kill her, I dare say she will write to you to-morrow, for there is none she respects more than yourself."

On the 3rd of September, which was the anniversary of the day the news of the Nile reached Naples, all the resources of the Sicilian Court were put forth to celebrate the occasion with befitting splendour. The King's palace and gardens at Colli were brilliantly illuminated; the battle of the Nile was displayed in fireworks, with a most impressive representation of the blowing up of the great French flagship *Orient*. Lieutenant Parsons, who was there, has written a flowery description of "the fairy scene presented by the illuminated palace and the gardens, the assembled royal family, the great in rank, the bold in arms, with Italy's nut-brown daughters, their lustrous black eyes and raven tresses, their elegant and voluptuous forms gliding through the mazy dance; and the whole presided over by the Genius of Taste, whose Attitudes were never

equalled, and with a suavity of manner, and a generous openness of mind and heart, where selfishness, with all its unamiable concomitants, pride, envy, and jealousy would never dwell——" Here the good lieutenant gets a little bewildered with his own phrases, and suddenly pulls up and says bluntly, "I mean Emma, Lady Hamilton."

Kind Emma certainly was on all occasions, and even amid this distracting scene, where there were so many important people calling upon her, she attended to the excited middies, and snatched a moment to win five pounds for them at *rouge et noir*, guessing that the state of their finances might be low. Emma's hand and Emma's flamboyant taste may be traced in the details of this festivity, and especially in what Lieutenant Parsons describes as "A temple erected to the goddess of Fame, who, perched on the dome, was blowing her trumpet; under the portico was seen an admirable Statue of our gallant hero, supported by Lady Hamilton on his right, and Sir William on his left. These statues were imposing and excellent likenesses. As we approached, the king's band played 'Rule Britannia.' At once silence prevailed. His present Majesty of Naples (then Prince Leopold) mounted the steps behind the large statue of Nelson, on which he placed a crown of laurel, richly inlaid with diamonds. The trumpets then blew a point of war, and the bands struck up

with great animation, 'See the conquering hero comes!' Lord Nelson's feelings were greatly touched, and big tears coursed each other down his weather-beaten cheeks, as on one knee he received the young prince in his only arm, who, with inimitable grace, had embraced him, calling him the guardian angel of his papa and his dominions. All who were susceptible of the finer feelings, showed them by their emotion; and many a countenance, that had looked with unconcern on the battle and the breeze, now turned aside, ashamed of their womanly weakness."

This was the gala side of life at Palermo. But with the more serious aspect of affairs Nelson was thoroughly dissatisfied—fretted, overworked, restless, with a heart ill at ease, and a temper irritably resentful of even the delicate and respectful warnings as to his conduct at the Sicilian Court, which were sent to him from headquarters at home. Because his own conscience was disapproving, he was morbidly sensitive to any suggestion of slight or reproof. To Lord Spencer he wrote, on one occasion, like a hurt child, "Do not, my dear Lord, let the Admiralty write harshly to me—my generous soul cannot bear it." He felt, not unjustly, that he was entitled to the chief command in the Mediterranean; but the Admiralty only entrusted him with it during the temporary absence of Lord Keith—from September, 1799, to the end of the year.

Possibly it was felt at home that Nelson's ardour for the cause of his Sicilian Majesty had somewhat overstepped the bounds, and unpleasant rumours were getting back to England of the undue influence of Lady Hamilton and the extravagant scenes at Palermo. The impression made upon Lord Keith by the Hamilton household, of which Nelson was now a far more important member than Sir William, is shown by his writing early in 1800 to the Honourable Arthur Paget, who succeeded Sir William Hamilton as British Minister: "Anything absurd coming from the quarter you mention does not surprise me. The whole was a scene of fulsome vanity and absurdity all the *long* eight days I was at Palermo."

But Nelson had already reached the point at which he could see no wrong in anything that Emma said or did—she embodied perfection in his partial eyes.

His somewhat excessive devotion to the Sicilian royalties was, however, strained almost to breaking-point at times. Ferdinand was not a statesman, and would not see the force of the reasons Nelson urged for his return to Naples to once more take up the affairs of his kingdom. "My situation here is indeed an uncomfortable one," the admiral wrote to Earl Spencer, "for plain common sense points out that the King should return to Naples, but nothing can move

him." And again, "Unfortunately the King and her Majesty do not at this moment draw exactly the same way; therefore, his Majesty will not go at this moment to Naples, where his presence is much wanted." Later he cried impatiently, "We do but waste our breath." It was not a satisfactory Court to serve; the true Neapolitan shuffle took place on every occasion, and Nelson himself would have seen things sooner in their proper light had it not been for the glamour that Lady Hamilton cast over him. Troubridge had no Emma to blind his clear seaman's eyes, and he was furious that the Maltese should be left to perish for want of the corn which the Court could so well have supplied. He wrote to Nelson from Malta early in January, 1800, with passionate indignation—

"As the King of Naples, or rather the Queen and her party, are bent on starving us, I see no alternative, but to leave these poor unhappy people to starve, without our being witnesses to their distress. I curse the day I ever served the King of Naples. . . . If the Neapolitan government will not supply corn, I pray your Lordship to recall us. . . . Such is the fever of my brain this minute, that I *assure you, on my honour*, if the Palermo traitors were here, I would shoot them first, and then myself. . . . Oh, could you see the horrid distress I daily experience, something would be done."

Nelson told General Graham that "I pray and beg, alas! in vain. Corn is here for Malta, but the Vessels will not go to sea. . . . Nothing is well done in this Country."

Lady Hamilton, as might be expected from her sympathetic heart, was active in her endeavours to procure a supply of grain for the Maltese. She told Greville, "I have rendered some service to the poor Maltese. I got them ten thousand pounds, and sent them corn when they were in distress." For these services, at Nelson's request, the Czar, as Grand Master of the Maltese Knights, bestowed upon her the Grand Cross of the Order. She had the right to call herself, "Dame Chevaliere of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem," and was the only Englishwoman, as she was proud to think, upon whom the Cross had been conferred. Nelson was much pleased, and wrote to Lord Minto: "The Emperor of Russia has just granted my request for a cross of Malta to our dear and invaluable Lady Hamilton."

But Nelson's infatuation for the "dear and invaluable Lady Hamilton" was fast becoming a scandal that threatened to darken his reputation. He and she at Palermo were making for themselves a dangerous paradise, and, shut up within it, were determined to ignore the world's censure —indeed, the outer world and the sane and wholesome ideals in which he had been brought

LADY HAMILTON EN SYBILLE

MADAME LEBRUN, PINX.

up at home must have seemed very far away to Nelson as he looked upon—

> "The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
> Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams."

His early traditions of right and wrong in matters of the most delicate personal honour, the simple memories of his Norfolk home, his good father and his patient wife, all alike seemed forgotten under the spell of one woman's influence. It is not meant to imply that Emma Hamilton was a Circe who wilfully bewitched men to their undoing and degradation—in her early days it was always she who had suffered and been the victim of men's selfish passions. At her worst she was not immoral, but at her best she remained *unmoral*. Her easy standards were not simply the result of her early unfortunate circumstances and experiences, but also of her own nature—large, capacious, tolerant, devoted, but unrestrained and without spiritual sensitiveness. The side of life that is spiritual and unseen never touched her; she liked the things that she could take in both hands and taste and touch; she revelled in glitter and profusion, in the pride of the eye. There was an essential coarseness of grain in her which was glossed over in her youth by her radiant beauty, her abounding vitality, and her eager willingness to please and to be pleased. But as she grew older and more assured in her

position as the wife of the British Ambassador and the friend of a Queen, the surface bloom was visibly rubbed away, and she began to degenerate in a lax, loud-mannered woman, whose defiance of the conventions she outraged and the wife she had supplanted was of the most crude and vulgar description. But even to the end of her life her underlying coarseness was saved from being wholly objectionable by the generous impulses and ardours of her nature. To the last, to paraphrase Carlyle's saying of the French people, she was "A gesticulating, sympathetic creature, and has a heart, and wears it on its sleeve."

It is not surprising that with her excitable, pleasure-loving temperament she became a victim to a passion for gambling—even before she ever touched a card she had gambled unconsciously with her beauty and her reputation as the stakes; she had the true gambler's nature. Nelson himself cared nothing for cards; but the unattractive spectacle of a woman flushed by the excitement of false gains, did not disturb his steady admiration for Emma, though many of his friends were much distressed by it. The good Troubridge, who was, as Captain Mahan says, "a pattern of that most faithful friendship which dares to risk alienation, if it may but save," wrote urgently to Nelson at the end of 1799—

"Pardon me, my Lord, it is my sincere esteem for you that makes me mention it. I

know you can have no pleasure sitting up all night at cards; why, then, sacrifice your health, comfort, purse, ease, everything, to the customs of a country where your stay cannot be long? . . . Your Lordship is a stranger to half that happens, or the talk it occasions; if you knew what your friends feel for you, I am sure you would cut all the nocturnal parties. The gambling of the people at Palermo is publicly talked of everywhere. I beseech your Lordship leave off. I wish my pen could tell you my feelings, I am sure you would oblidge me. Lady H——'s character will suffer, nothing can prevent people from talking. A gambling woman, in the eye of an Englishman, is lost."

People did talk, but neither Nelson nor Emma would take heed—the voice of friendship and the voice of censure alike fell on deaf ears. They seemed determined to believe that all must be well, because they wished it. Emma wrote to Greville in February, 1800—

"We are more united and comfortable than ever, in spite of the infamous Jacobin papers jealous of Lord Nelson's glory and Sir William's and mine. But we do not mind them. Lord N. is a truly vertuous and great man; and because we have been fagging, and ruining our health, and sacrificing every comfort in the cause of loyalty, our private characters are to be stabbed in the dark. First it was said Sir W.

and Lord N. fought; then that we played and lost. First Sir W. and Lord N. live like brothers; next Lord N. never plays: and this I give you my word of honour. So I beg you will contradict any of these vile reports. Not that Sir W. and Lord N. mind it; and I get scolded by the Queen and all of them for having suffered one day's uneasiness."

But though Emma might protest, she did not alter her habits. Lady Minto, writing to her sister in July, 1800, described some of the things that took place at Palermo.

"Nelson and the Hamiltons," she said, "all lived together in a house of which he bore the expense, which was enormous, and every sort of gaming went on half the night. Nelson used to sit with large parcels of gold before him, and generally go to sleep, Lady Hamilton taking from the heap without counting, and playing with his money to the amount of £500 a night. Her rage is play, and Sir William says when he is dead she will be a beggar. However, she has about £30,000 worth of diamonds from the royal family in presents. She sits at the Councils, and rules everything and everybody."

There is a certain malice and exaggeration in this picture, but undoubtedly it was substantially true, and the spectacle of Nelson sitting half asleep while Lady Hamilton gambled away his gold, is sad enough without any additions—

truly for him it was "the expense of spirit in a waste of shame."

But even in the toils of his unhappy passion, Nelson was still active and ardent at sea in the pursuit of what he regarded as his life's mission, and which he expressed in the words, "Down, down, with the French!" During the months that he was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, he never let his infatuation interfere with his professional duties, except in that he made Palermo his headquarters. After Lord Keith returned at the beginning of 1800, and directed him to report himself at Leghorn, he wrote to Lady Hamilton, "To say how I miss your house and company would be saying little; but in truth you and Sir William have so spoiled me, that I am not happy anywhere else but with you, nor have I an idea that I ever can be." And on another occasion he tells her petulantly, "Having a Commander-in-Chief, I cannot come on shore till I have made *my manners* to him. Times are changed." Some of his complaints to her have the simplicity and directness of a child seeking instant consolation for a hurt. "My head aches dreadfully," he says in one letter, "and I have none here to give me a moment's comfort."

But the true Nelson shines out when in chasing four French sail he wrote to her, "I feel anxious to get up with these ships, and shall

be unhappy not to take them myself, for first my greatest happiness is to serve my gracious King and Country, and I am envious only of glory; for if it be sin to covet glory, I am the most offending soul alive." And on this occasion he had the immense satisfaction of capturing *Le Généreux*, one of the ships that escaped from the French rout in Aboukir Bay. "Thank God!" Nelson cries, "12 out of 13, onely the *Guillaume Tell* remaining." But between the grudge he bore Keith—his attitude is plainly shown in his bitter remark to Troubridge, "*We of the Nile* are not equal to Lord Keith in his estimation, and we ought to think it an honour to serve under such a *clever* man"—and his evident desire to get back to Palermo, Nelson's actions after this became distinctly warped. He told Sir William Hamilton that Lord Keith received him and his account with stiffness: "It did not, that I could perceive, cause a pleasing muscle in his face," as he somewhat oddly expresses it. To Lady Hamilton he wrote, "Had you seen the Peer receive me, I know not what you would have done; but I can guess. But never mind. I told him that I had made a vow, if I took the *Généreux* by myself, it was my intention to strike my flag. To which he made no answer." Probably Lord Keith was too much surprised that Nelson could talk of striking his flag when the tale of the Nile

trophies was still incomplete, when the *Guillaume Tell* was still uncaptured, to be able to make any answer. The same surprise affected Troubridge and Ball when they found that Nelson had, on the score of his health, requested permission from his commander-in-chief "to go to my friends, at Palermo, for a few weeks." Troubridge tried to tempt him with the prospect of French ships and of the long-expected fall of Malta: "I beseech you hear the entreaties of a sincere friend, and do not go to Sicily for the present." Both he and Ball were "extremely anxious" that their beloved admiral should have the "honour and happiness" of receiving the surrender of the French ships and garrison. And more than this, they wished to keep him from Lady Hamilton. But Nelson was not to be led or persuaded: for the first and only time in his life he found Emma Hamilton a stronger attraction than his duty. He wrote to her on the 4th of March, "My health is in such a state, and to say the truth, an uneasy mind at being taught my lesson like a schoolboy, that my DETERMINATION is made to leave Malta on the 15th morning of this month, on the first moment after the wind comes favourable; unless I am SURE that I shall get hold of the French ships." So he went back to Palermo, and a few days later the *Guillaume Tell* was captured by Berry and Blackwood.

Nelson never ceased contrasting Lord Keith with Lord St. Vincent. Even when forwarding to Keith letters regarding the capture of the *Guillaume Tell*, and saying, with his usual generous ardour, how he gloried in the success of his officers, who were his "darling children, served in his school," he could not refrain from the little sting of adding that "all of us caught our professional zeal and fire from the great and good Earl St. Vincent."

But at this time his own professional zeal and fire burned somewhat low: his conduct was not approved by the Admiralty at home, and in May Lord Spencer wrote Nelson a letter that must have been painful reading to the admiral's sore and impatient spirit.

"Having observed that you have been under the necessity of quitting your station off Malta," he says, "on account of your health, which I am persuaded you could not have thought of doing without such necessity, it appeared to me much more advisible for you to come home at once, than to be obliged to remain inactive at Palermo, while active service was going on in other parts of the station. . . . I am joined in the opinion by all your friends here, that you will be more likely to recover your health and strength in England than in an inactive situation at a Foreign Court, however pleasing the respect and gratitude shown to you for your services may be, and no

testimonies of respect and gratitude from that Court to you can be, I am convinced, too great for the very essential services you have rendered it."

Such was official opinion in England; while about this time Lord Minto wrote—

"I have letters from Nelson and Lady Hamilton. It does not seem clear whether he will go home. I hope he will not for his own sake, and he will at least, I hope, take Malta first. He does not seem at all conscious of the sort of discredit he has fallen into, or the cause of it, for he still writes, not wisely, about Lady H., and all that. But it is hard to condemn and use ill a hero, as he is in his own element, for being foolish about a woman who has art enough to make fools of many wiser than an admiral."

Had Nelson shown sufficient moral strength to put himself out of reach of the temptation which was clouding his clear honour, all might still have been well. But his craving heart was too much for him; not all the solemn voices of duty and right, of faith and upright dealing, could prevent him returning to Lady Hamilton to ask and to obtain from her that tender flattery and adoring kindness which were so soothing to his sore spirit. However he may hitherto have disguised his passion to himself and called it by the name of friendship, there is little doubt that in the summer of 1800 it completely overpowered

his resistance and his sense of honour and passed into the stage when he fearlessly and frantically avowed that Emma Hamilton was his "wife in the sight of Heaven." Thus do men, driven by their own desires, persuade themselves that their wishes make fresh laws; and it is not the least noble natures which feel themselves compelled to twist the universe upside down that they may put a face of right upon their own unhappy actions. It is, indeed, the perverted sense of right drives them to such extremes, for they would not believe with Hamlet that a man may "smile and smile and be a villain."

There was nothing in his surroundings to help Nelson resist his passion—the atmosphere he lived in was soft, luxurious, enamouring, soothing scruples to sleep. Emma Hamilton herself was not hard to win; indeed, from the first she had wooed and flattered him, not with any deliberate intention of leading him astray, but simply from easy yielding to her own impulses and to her enthusiastic love for glory. There could not have been a more dangerous combination than these two ardent natures; once they were brought together, in constant sight and presence of each other, the outcome was almost inevitable. Lord Malmesbury said of Nelson, "He added to genius, valour, and energy, the singular power of electrifying all within his atmosphere." And with those dazzling and

AS "ALOPE."

GEORGE ROMNEY

persuasive qualities the sheer lovableness of the man must be remembered. In spite of the great mistake of his life, the great blot upon his fair fame, glory and honour were to Nelson one and inseparable. But to Emma honour had been so early lost that she had never learned to regard it as an indispensable foundation of existence. And so when Nelson's own resistance broke down he found no second barrier in the virtue of the woman he loved. It was probably the very thought of their approaching separation which showed them all too plainly how much they had become to each other, and what a sorry farce was all talk of platonic friendship.

The time was drawing near for them to leave Italy—Italy which had been the scene of their meeting, of their joint exertions, and of their growing passion. They were learning the meaning of the simple words in "Cuchulain of Muirthemne"—"all things are good in comparison with a parting." The prospect filled Emma with depression; she did not want to leave the sunny land that suited her so completely, and where she had played such a brilliant part, to return to the air of England, which she may well have felt would be cold and critical; where she could no longer be the British Ambassadress, no longer the friend of a Queen, and the principal ornament of a Court; above all, where she would have to yield her place by Nelson's side to his rightful

wife. It was not a happy vision to the pleasure-loving woman who had so completely lost her earlier simplicity and who now hated dulness and obscurity above all things. Sir William was growing old and unenterprising; he sighed for quietness and repose, and Emma had no longer any feeling for him save a sort of daughterly affection. The very considerable difference in their years had grown more marked as Sir William stepped, stumbling, upon the boundaries of old age. Nelson was her all; he represented not only love, but glory, the centre of the stage, the focus of the world's eye—and these were things that Emma could not contentedly relinquish.

But the end of the Italian drama was nearly come. On the 22nd of April, Sir William Hamilton presented his letters of recall, and the day following Nelson took him and his wife for a pleasure voyage in the *Foudroyant* to Syracuse and Malta —a farewell to the Mediterranean. At Syracuse Nelson had victualled and watered his ships, owing to Emma's exertions on his behalf, before the Battle of the Nile, and had assured her, "surely watering at the Fountain of Arethusa we must have victory." He would not forget that past occasion when visiting the famous fountain with the woman who had aided him to triumph, for in Nelson's passion for Emma Hamilton love and patriotism were inextricably mingled. They

also went to Malta, and, according to the somewhat inaccurate narrative of Lieutenant Parsons, the *Foudroyant*, by accident, got within range of the shot from the island, and Emma's precious life was exposed to danger, much to Nelson's anger and distress. But any form of excitement, even cannon-balls, appealed to Emma, and she is represented as arguing with Nelson on the *Foudroyant's* quarter-deck, and declaring that she would not go below. This incident may or may not be authentic, but it is at any rate characteristic! Nelson was to say to her, some years later, that their child Horatia "is like her mother; will have her own way, or kick up a devil of a dust."

They returned to Palermo for the last time. If the Hamiltons were to go home, Nelson had made up his mind that he would go too. "I go with our dear friends Sir William and Lady Hamilton," he wrote to Minto, "but whether by water or land depends on the will of Lord Keith." He hoped that he might be allowed to go home in his flagship, in which case he would have taken his "dear friends" with him. The Queen of Naples at this time decided for diplomatic as well as family reasons to visit Vienna, and she was to travel with Nelson and the Hamiltons. So, without referring to his commander-in-chief, Nelson withdrew the *Foudroyant* and *Alexander* from the blockade of Malta to convey himself, his royal

guest, and the Hamiltons to Leghorn. Keith was naturally amazed by this act, which was not only injurious to the discipline but also to the actual needs of the navy. On the 24th of June he went himself to Leghorn, where he expected, as he wrote scornfully, "to be bored by Lord Nelson for permission to take the Queen to Palermo, and princes and princesses to all parts of the globe." Lady Minto heard some gossip about the Nelson party from Mr. Wyndham, British Minister to Tuscany, who had just arrived in Vienna.

"He left the Queen of Naples, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and Nelson, at Leghorn," she wrote to her sister on the 6th of July. "The Queen has given up all thoughts of coming here. She asked Lord Keith in her own proper person for the *Foudroyant* to take her back. He refused positively giving her such a ship. The Queen wept, concluding that royal tears were irresistible; but he remained unmoved, and would grant nothing but a frigate to convoy her own frigates to Trieste. He told her Lady Hamilton had had command of the fleet long enough. The Queen is very ill with a sort of convulsive fit, and Nelson is staying there to nurse her; he does not intend going home till he has escorted her back to Palermo. His zeal for the public service seems entirely lost in his love and vanity, and they all sit and flatter each other all day long."

The Queen finally decided to go on to Vienna instead of back to Palermo; but her hesitations kept the party hanging on for a month at Leghorn. The idea of going by sea was abandoned, owing to Keith's refusal of ships. So Nelson struck his flag, said farewell to the *Foudroyant*—whose Barge's crew wrote him a very touching little letter, saying, "It is with extreme grief that we find that you are about to leave us," and begging him to "pardon the rude style of seamen, who are but little acquainted with writing,"—and set out through Europe with the Queen of Naples and the Hamiltons. It was not a way of returning to his native land calculated to conciliate English public opinion, which was already somewhat disturbed over his behaviour. During the journey that assumed something of the nature of a triumphal progress, Emma conducted herself in a manner which left every one of breeding and good feeling gazing after her with raised hands and eyebrows. It was as though she would flaunt before the eyes of Europe the way in which she had led Nelson captive, and the admiral, who, as Minto said, was "in many points a really great man, in others a baby," lent himself passively to her extravagant exhibition of bad taste. At no time of her life does Emma appear so little attractive as during this journey homewards to the England she had not seen for fourteen years. It is impossible not to resent

the way she trailed Nelson about, and there is something quite distressing in Lady Minto's picture of him when they all reached Vienna.

"I don't think him altered in the least," she said, and she had known him during his early operations in Corsica. "He has the same shock head and the same honest simple manners; but he is devoted to *Emma*, he thinks her quite an *angel*, and talks of her as such to her face and behind her back, and she leads him about like a keeper with a bear. She must sit by him at dinner to cut his meat, and he carries her pocket-handkerchief. He is a gig from ribands, orders and stars, but he is just the same with us as ever he was."

Nelson and the Hamiltons stopped a month at Vienna, and there Emma parted from the Queen she had really loved and served so well. Maria Carolina felt the parting sincerely, and in a farewell letter addressed her as "My dear Lady and tender friend," telling her, "I repeat what I have already said, that at all times and places, and under all circumstances, Emma, dear Emma, shall be my friend and sister, and this sentiment will remain unchanged. Receive my thanks once more for all you have done, and for the sincere friendship you have shown me."

From Vienna they went to Prague, Dresden, and Hamburg. At Dresden they met Mrs. St. George, afterwards Mrs. Trench, whose

comments on the whole party, as written in her Journal, are so unflattering and—perhaps by reason of their sharpness—so well known. The day after they arrived, she wrote—

"Dined at Mr. Elliot's, with only the Nelson party. It is plain that Lord Nelson thinks of nothing but Lady Hamilton, who is totally occupied by the same object. She is bold, forward, coarse, assuming and vain. Her figure is colossal, but, excepting her feet, which are hideous, well shaped. Her bones are large, and she is exceedingly *embonpoint*. She resembles the bust of Ariadne; the shape of all her features is fine, as is the form of her head, and particularly her ears; her teeth are a little irregular, but tolerably white; her eyes light blue, with a brown spot in one, which, though a defect, takes nothing away from her beauty and expression; her eyebrows and hair are dark and her complexion coarse; her expression is strongly marked, variable, and interesting; her movements in common life, ungraceful; her voice loud, yet not disagreeable. Lord Nelson is a little man, without any dignity; who, I suppose, must resemble what Suwarrow was in his youth, as he is like all the pictures I have seen of that general. Lady Hamilton takes possession of him, and he is a willing captive, the most submissive and devoted I have seen. Sir William is old, infirm, all admiration of his wife, and never spoke to-day

but to applaud her. Miss Cornelia Knight [who was travelling with them] seems the decided flatterer of the two, and never opens her mouth but to show forth their praise; and Mrs. Cadogan, Lady Hamilton's mother, is what one might expect. After dinner we had several songs in honour of Lord Nelson, written by Miss Knight, and sung by Lady Hamilton. She puffs the incense full in his face; but he receives it with pleasure, and snuffs it up very cordially."

That would hardly be recognized as a picture of Romney's "divine lady." But, though tinged with malice and conscious superiority, and redeemed by no grace of kindly restraint, it is to be feared that Mrs. St. George gives a fairly true account of what Emma Hamilton had become.

A day or two later she wrote a description of the famous "Attitudes"—

"Breakfasted with Lady Hamilton, and saw her represent in succession the best statues and paintings extant. She assumes their attitude, expression, and drapery with great facility, swiftness, and accuracy. Several Indian shawls, a chair, some antique vases, a wreath of roses, a tambourine, and a few children are her whole apparatus. She stands at one end of the room, with a strong light to her left, and every other window closed. Her hair is short, dressed like an antique, and her gown a simple calico chemise,

very easy, with loose sleeves to the wrist. She disposes the shawls so as to form Grecian, Turkish, and other drapery, as well as a variety of turbans. Her arrangement of the turbans is absolute sleight-of-hand; she does it so quickly, so easily, and so well. It is a beautiful performance, amusing to the most ignorant, and highly interesting to the lovers of art. The chief of her imitations are from the antique. Each representation lasts about ten minutes. It is remarkable that, though coarse and ungraceful in common life, she becomes highly graceful, and even beautiful, during this performance. It is also singular that, in spite of the accuracy of her imitation of the finest ancient draperies, her usual dress is tasteless, vulgar, loaded, and unbecoming. She has borrowed several of my gowns, and much admires my dress, which cannot flatter, as her own is so frightful. Her waist is absolutely between her shoulders. After showing her attitudes, she sung, and I accompanied. Her voice is good, and very strong, but she is frequently out of tune; her expression strongly marked and variable; and she has no shake, no flexibility, and no sweetness. She acts her songs, which I think the last degree of bad taste. All imperfect imitations are disagreeable, and to represent passion with the eyes fixed on a book and the person confined to a spot, must always be a poor piece of acting *manqué*. She continues her

demonstrations of friendship, and said many fine things about my accompanying her at sight. Still she does not gain upon me. I think her bold, daring, vain even to folly, and stamped with the manners of her first situation much more strongly than one would suppose, after having represented Majesty, and lived in good company fifteen years. Her ruling passions seem to me vanity, avarice, and love for the pleasures of the table. She shows a great avidity for presents, and has actually obtained some at Dresden by the common artifice of admiring and longing. Mr. Elliot says, 'She will captivate the Prince of Wales, whose mind is as vulgar as her own, and play a great part in England.'"

It is evident that Lady Hamilton set Mrs. St. George's nerves on edge, but she seemed unable to keep away from the Nelson party, and has a good deal more to say in her Journal of their doings at Dresden. It appears that though, like most people, she admired the "Attitudes," yet Lady Hamilton "acted *Nina* intolerably ill." It will be remembered that the representation of this *Nina* had moved Romney almost to tears many years before, and Nelson at any rate admired it whole-heartedly, for while Emma acted, the dear uncritical admiral kept crying out with enthusiasm, "Mrs. Siddons be hanged!"

Even the last entry about Nelson and the Hamiltons in Mrs. St. George's Journal contains

a sting; she does not leave them a shred of dignity or restraint at parting.

"The moment they were on board," she says she was told by Mr. Elliot, who saw them off, "there was an end of the fine arts, of the attitudes, of the acting, the dancing, and the singing. Lady Hamilton's maid began to scold in French about some provisions which had been forgot, . . . Lady Hamilton began bawling for an Irish stew, and her old mother set about washing the potatoes, which she did as cleverly as possible. They were exactly like Hogarth's actresses dressing in the barn. In the evening I went to congratulate the Elliots on their deliverance, and found them very sensible of it."

It is not entirely certain that the immaculate Mr. Elliot and Mrs. St. George come out best in this encounter. Manners are much, but they are not everything. Perhaps Mrs. Cadogan peeling her potatoes was no more vulgar than Mrs. St. George in thinking her an object of scorn. Emma was certainly capable of "bawling," but then she was also capable of acting in a time of danger with true heroic grit. Had Mrs. St. George chosen to censure the moral wrong of which Nelson and Lady Hamilton were guilty, the outrage to the feelings of the silent wife waiting in England while they paraded the Continent, there could have been nothing but agreement with her condemnation. But it was

external things she criticized: the defects of manner and taste of a great and worn-out seaman, who was childishly vain and very slow to think that people could be judging him unkindly, and of a woman whose heart was on all occasions better than her breeding.

CHAPTER XIII

ENGLAND AGAIN

EVERY seaport in England would have rejoiced to be the first to greet the returning Hero of the Nile. But the honour fell to Yarmouth, in Nelson's native county of Norfolk, and on the 6th of November, 1800, he landed there, accompanied by his inseparable companions, Sir William and Lady Hamilton. Yarmouth received the greatest admiral who had ever stepped upon English soil with hearty seafaring enthusiasm. The quaint old seaport blossomed into bunting, the ships in the harbour hoisted their colours, guns fired, infantry paraded, Nelson's carriage was unhorsed, and his shouting countrymen drew him in triumph to the Wrestler's Inn, which was his first shelter under an English roof for nearly three years. The Mayor and Corporation waited upon him in solemn state, in order to present him with the freedom of the town—an idle ceremony, after all, for thenceforward Nelson held, as by royal right, the freedom of every true English heart. If he ever met with slights and coldness

after the Nile it was from those in high places, who were stamped with the curious official fear of recognizing a hero before he is safely dead. But the people of Yarmouth had no such caution: they rejoiced to have Nelson among them warm and living, and when on the day of his arrival he went to a thanksgiving service, they went to church with him, as did all the naval officers on shore, and the Mayor and Corporation.

Emma Hamilton shared in all these triumphs. When he landed she walked down the little wooden jetty with her hand on Nelson's arm; when he addressed the people from the balcony of the Wrestler's Inn, she stood by his side before the eyes of the assembled townsfolk; when he went in procession to the church, she was with him. But the Yarmouth folk looked kindly on a handsome face, and in any case they were not inclined to criticize their glorious admiral. It is believed that on this occasion Lady Hamilton wore the dress which had been designed for the Palermo *fête* of a year ago—a dress of white muslin, with a flounce embroidered in gold thread and coloured silks, with anchors and leaves, with medallions containing the words "Nelson" and "Bronte" alternating on the border. A piece of this flounce was to be seen in the Loan Collection of the Museum of the United Service Institute in the Centenary Year of Trafalgar.

Yarmouth could not pay enough honour to

LADY HAMILTON AS "THE COMIC MUSE"

ANGELICA KAUFFMAN

the hero and his party : " On leaving the Town," says the *Naval Chronicle*, " the corps of cavalry unexpectedly drew up, saluted, and followed the carriage, not only to the Town's end, but to the boundary of the County."

And so Nelson set out for London, with Emma at his side, to meet the wife he had not seen since the days when there had been no shadow between them, when rumour, flaunting another woman's name, had not set foot upon the threshold of their household peace. Lady Nelson has been unjustly blamed for not having met her husband at Yarmouth on his landing. But it appears that in awaiting him in London, with his aged father, she was obeying his express wish. She had been expecting his return for several months, in uncertainty as to when and where he would land—for Nelson at first talked of Portsmouth. Captain Hardy, too, was anxiously awaiting the admiral's return, and in one of his newly discovered letters (published for the first time by Mr. John Murray, in 1906), he says—

" Notwithstanding all the Newspapers, his Lordship is not arrived in town, and when he will God only knows. His Father has lost all patience, her Ladyship bears up very well as yet but I much fear she also will soon despond. He certainly arrived at Yarmouth on Thursday last and there has been no letter received by anybody. Should he not arrive to-morrow I think I

shall set off for Yarmouth *as I know too well the cause of his not coming*."

Alexander Davison, earlier than this, had been desired by Nelson to inform his wife of his impending return to England, and in making the announcement Davison added, "I fancy that your anxious mind will be relieved by receiving all that you hold sacred and valuable." But however Lady Nelson's anxious mind may have doubted and feared, she had refrained from reproaches and written patiently and kindly to her wandering husband. In one of her last letters to him, before he left Palermo, she said—

"I can with safety put my hand on my heart and say it has been my study to please and make you happy, and I still flatter myself we shall meet before very long. I feel most sensibly all your kindnesses to my dear son, and I hope he will add much to our comfort. Our good father has been in good spirits ever since we heard from you; indeed, my spirits were quite worn out, the time had been so long. I thank God for the preservation of my dear husband, and your recent success off Malta. The taking of the *Généreux* seems to give great spirits to all. God bless you, my dear husband, and grant us a happy meeting."

That is a simple and rather touching letter; not the letter of a selfish, cold-hearted woman, or one who had ceased to care. She could not

throw herself into the passionate raptures over the taking of the *Généreux* that would have been natural to Emma Hamilton. She had not a passionate nature; but, such as she was, Nelson had met and won and married her. It is a noticeable fact that even at the time of his engagement, when he might naturally be expected to see everything through the glamour of love and youth, he never lavished on Fanny Nisbet the extravagant passion he, as a much older man, spent on a much older woman. There was a calmness about his declarations of affection for his wife that, in view of later events, is very significant. The first letter he wrote her after their engagement is typical: "My greatest wish," he said, "is to be united to you; and the foundation of all conjugal happiness, real love and esteem, is, I trust, what you believe I possess in the strongest degree towards you." He is contented, but certainly not rapturous, and he harps unduly on "esteem" as the only foundation for a happy marriage. Esteem was as powerless as chaff before the wind when he knew the meaning of a consuming passion. Shortly before the wedding he wrote to her:—

"His Royal Highness often tells me, he believes I am married; for he never saw a lover so easy, or say so little of the object he has a regard for. When I tell him I certainly am not, he says, 'Then he is sure I must have a

great esteem for you, and that it is not what is (vulgarly), I do not much like the use of that word, called love.' He is right: my love is founded on esteem, the only foundation that can make the passion last."

It is not recorded how his Frances liked this letter: she was of a calm and unexcitable temperament; but, even so, most women would wish a little more ardour in a lover. Nelson himself had ardour and passion in plenty when he met the woman who could stir him to the heart. But Frances Nisbet never roused in him that perturbation of spirit, that gladness and idealizing glamour which go with love—the word he did "not much like" in 1787! When he praised her, it was without a lover's extravagance, as when he wrote to his brother: "The dear object you must like. Her sense, polite manners, and, to you I may say, beauty, you will much admire. She possesses sense far superior to half the people of our acquaintance."

Such were his feelings towards the woman he made his wife. That she stirred nothing deeper in him, that he whose heart was so warm and ardent, and whose sensibilities were so keen, was content to marry on a basis of "esteem," made up their double misfortune, their double tragedy. Frances Nelson could not say, as his wife, "I am as a spirit who has dwelt within his heart of hearts." Judging from her letters, she never fully

realized the nature of the man she had married; never realized the need of so making herself a part of his life that neither years, nor absence, nor the bewitchments of any other woman, could have drawn him away from her. But later Nelson himself realized this need; realized with fatal surety when he met Emma that "esteem" was not a sufficient basis for a lifelong fidelity.

It is not right to blame Lady Nelson, as has been too often done, for failing to hold Nelson's affections. According to the light that was given her she was a good and patient wife. As Sir Harris Nicolas says: "The exemplary character of that amiable woman is little known to the world; and it is only justice to her to state that her letters, which in their style are perfectly simple and unaffected, are filled with expressions of warm attachment to her husband, great anxiety for his safety, lively interest in his fame, and entire submission to his wishes." A lady who was the widow of one of Nelson's officers, and the personal friend of both Lord and Lady Nelson, wrote to Sir Harris Nicolas as follows:—

"I will only say on this sad subject, that Lord Nelson always bore testimony to the merits of Lady Nelson, and declared, in parting from her, that he had not one single complaint to make—that in temper, person, and in mind, she was everything he could wish. They had never had a quarrel; but the Syren had sung, and cast

her spell about him, and he was too guileless in his nature, and too unsuspecting, to be aware of his danger until it was too late. I am aware of your intention not to touch upon this delicate subject: I only allude to it, in order to assure you, from my personal knowledge, in a long and intimate acquaintance, that Lady Nelson's conduct was not only affectionate, wise, and prudent, but admirable, throughout her married life, and that she had not a single reproach to make herself. The affections of her Lord were alienated, not when they were together, but at a distance, and beyond the reach of her mild and feminine virtues. I say not this to cast unnecessary blame on *one* whose memory I delight to honour, but only in justice to that truly good and amiable woman, the residue of whose life was rendered so unhappy by circumstances over which she had no control. If mildness, forbearance, and indulgence to the weaknesses of human nature could have availed, her fate would have been very different. No reproach ever passed her lips; and when she parted from her Lord, on his hoisting his Flag again, it was without the most distant suspicion that he meant it to be final, and that in this life they were never to meet again. Excuse my troubling you with these observations, as I am desirous that you should know the worth of her who has so often been misrepresented, from the wish of many to cast the blame

anywhere, but on him who was so deservedly dear to the Nation. There never was a kinder heart than Lord Nelson's; but he was a child in the hands of a very designing person, and few, perhaps, could have resisted the various artifices employed to enslave the mind of the Hero, when combined with great beauty, extraordinary talents, and the semblance of an enthusiastic attachment."

On Saturday the 8th of November Nelson reached London and met his wife, who was waiting for him at Nerot's Hotel in St. James's Street. No record of what took place at this meeting is in existence—neither the husband nor the wife would be likely to put their feelings on paper; but the meeting can hardly have been otherwise than constrained and painful. On the one side was reproachful distress, on the other a distracted heart and a burdened conscience. And yet Nelson displayed either extraordinary callousness or extraordinary simplicity—even those who most love and admire him will be puzzled to say which—for apparently he expected his wife to receive Lady Hamilton with open arms. It is true that Lady Nelson did not know the lengths to which his passion for Emma had gone, but *he* knew, and he must have been wandering in a fog of moral blindness when he conceived it possible that the two women could meet and accept each other.

At first an attempt was made to draw a veil of decency, convention, or hypocrisy—any word may be chosen—over a sufficiently intolerable state of things. Lady Nelson had written to Yarmouth before the Nelson party set out for London, inviting the Hamiltons to stay with herself and her husband at Round Wood, their country home. When Emma reached London she wrote to Lady Nelson, shortly after her arrival—

"I would have done myself the honour of calling on you and Lord Nelson this day, but I am not well nor in spirits. . . . Permit me in the morning to have the pleasure of seeing you, and hoping, my dear Lady Nelson, the continuance of your friendship, which will be in Sir William and myself for ever lasting to you and your family."

But words were a frail bridge to throw across such a gap as yawned between the two women. Lady Nelson and Lady Hamilton met a few times, dined together, went to the play. It is said that in the box of a theatre Lady Nelson was so overcome by seeing her husband's public devotion to Emma that she fainted; while another form of the story is that Emma was the one who fainted, and that Lady Nelson going to her aid discovered the secret which gave her sick fears their fullest justification. Be that as it may, the situation was impossible, the explosion inevitable.

At first Nelson endeavoured to mould things to his will, to believe that somehow the relationship might be adjusted. But it was beyond even his powers—London was not Naples, or even Dresden; the Mediterranean glamour no longer hid the ugly outlines of wrong-doing. He felt the difference in the two atmospheres acutely, and shortly after his return said bitterly, "This place of London but ill-suits my disposition." It was a miserable time for them all; in their different ways they all three suffered, and Emma once more proved the truth of the old saying, that it is the wrong-doer who never can forgive the wronged, for in all her later references to Lady Nelson there is more than a touch of malice. Emma had not a small or feline nature, but she frequently displays these characteristics towards the woman she had ousted from her place at Nelson's side. The general disapproval and censure which Nelson's infatuation for Lady Hamilton aroused in London society acted ill upon the admiral; it aroused his opposition and defiance, he was not to be wrested from his unhappy love by sneers or cold looks, whether from Court or commons. Lady Nelson, in his distempered eyes, began to appear as an adversary to be crushed, instead of a woman wronged in her tenderest feelings. Sir William Hotham, who knew her, said, "His conduct to Lady Nelson was the very extreme of unjustifiable weakness, for he should

at least have attempted to conceal his infirmities, without publicly wounding the feelings of a woman whose own conduct he well knew was irreproachable." In attempted justification of her own and Nelson's conduct, Emma Hamilton laid stress on Lady Nelson's temper, declaring that it drove her Lord into wandering wretchedly all one night through the streets of London, till at last in his despair he sought refuge at her and Sir William's house in Grosvenor Square. The story may have some truth in it, but it bears evident marks of exaggeration. And if Frances Nelson was driven to tears, reproaches, anger, was it surprising? Maybe it was not the way to win back her husband's strayed affection, but it was the way that many a woman, more loving than wise, has been driven to in similar wretched circumstances. Her spirit, her self-respect, her very affection as a good wife, forbade her to submit silently. Nelson had made her a peeress, but such an honour proved paltry when the giver proved unkind. Lady Nelson was not a specially large-souled or large-hearted woman, but at least she was above the meanness of being content with worldly advantages when the very spirit and essence which would have made them sweet was withdrawn.

But his wife's sufferings and his wife's wrongs were microscopic in Nelson's eyes. For him it was Emma, and nothing but Emma. His honour

gone awry and falsely true, he felt it necessary, as Miss Cornelia Knight says in her "Autobiography," "to devote himself more and more to Lady Hamilton, for the purpose of what he called supporting her." All the deeper tenderness of his nature, all the passionate desire—which had hitherto gone unsatisfied—for a child of his own, was called out by the fact that Emma was expecting shortly to become a mother. So with the object of "supporting" her, and in almost direct insult to his own wife, Nelson went with her and Sir William Hamilton to spend Christmas with "Vathek" Beckford at Fonthill Abbey, leaving Lady Nelson behind in lodgings at Arlington Street. This is perhaps the most callous action of which Nelson was ever guilty; and yet it was not deliberate cruelty to his wife, but the blind passion which put Emma and her need before all the world.

William Beckford was naturally anxious to welcome the Hero of the Nile to his house, and a flavour of scandal in the attendant circumstances mattered little to him. On the 24th of November he wrote to Lady Hamilton and said, "I exist in the hopes of seeing Fonthill honoured by his victorious presence, and if his engagements permit his accompanying you here, we shall enjoy a few comfortable days of repose, uncontaminated by the sight and prattle of drawing-room parasites." While Emma could procure

him any advantages, he did not scruple to address her with extravagant flattery, speaking of her as a "superior being," and saying, "You must shine steadily. . . . That light alone which beams from your image, ever before my fancy, like a vision of the Madonna della Gloria, keeps my eyes sufficiently open to subscribe myself with tolerable distinctness ——." But his real opinion of the beauty came out many years later in his "Memoirs," where, replying to the question whether Lady Hamilton was a fascinating woman, he says—

"I never thought her so. She was somewhat masculine, but symmetrical in figure, so that Sir William called her his Grecian. She was full in person, not fat, but *embonpoint.* Her carriage often majestic, rather than feminine. Not at all delicate, ill-bred, often very affected, a devil in temper when set on edge. She had beautiful hair and displayed it. Her countenance was agreeable,—fine, hardly beautiful, but the outline excellent. She affected sensibility, but felt none—was artful; and no wonder, she had been trained in the Court of Naples—a fine school for an English woman of any stamp. Nelson was infatuated. She could make him believe anything."

The strain of such a situation could not go on indefinitely, though it appears that Lady Nelson consented to overlook her husband's conduct in

AS "CIRCE"

GEORGE ROMNEY

visiting Fonthill Abbey with Emma, for after his return they still lived together for a time in Arlington Street. Lord Nelson's solicitor, William Haslewood, was present when the final rupture came.

"In the winter of 1800, 1801," he says, "I was breakfasting with Lord and Lady Nelson, at their lodgings in Arlington Street, and a cheerful conversation was passing on indifferent subjects, when Lord Nelson spoke of something which had been done or said by 'dear Lady Hamilton;' upon which Lady Nelson rose from her chair, and exclaimed, with much vehemence, 'I am sick of hearing of dear Lady Hamilton, and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me.' Lord Nelson, with perfect calmness, said: 'Take care, Fanny, what you say. I love you sincerely; but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her otherwise than with affection and admiration.' Without one soothing word or gesture, but muttering something about her mind being made up, Lady Nelson left the room, and shortly after drove from the house. They never lived together again."

Such was the end of the marriage founded on "esteem." Nelson had many times declared that his motto was "All or nothing," and he followed it out in this aspect of his life, as in all others. Captain Mahan says truly, "The same

disregard of consequences that hazarded all for all, in battle or for duty, broke through the barriers within which prudence, reputation, decency, or even weakness or cowardice, confine the actions of lesser men." He had "the reckless singleness of heart which was not ashamed to own its love, but rather gloried in the public exhibition of a faith in the worthiness of its object, and a constancy, which never wavered to the hour of his death."

He sacrificed his wife and his own fair and untarnished name for Emma's sake—he gave her all he had to give, which was much, and never, while he lived, counted the cost or looked back. He gave Lady Nelson a handsome allowance, and, when finally parting from her, made the generous but, under the circumstances, somewhat curious statement: "I call God to witness there is nothing in you or your conduct I wish otherwise." Lady Nelson wrote to her husband three times after their separation: once to thank him for his "generosity and tenderness" in giving her an ample allowance; once to declare her "thankfulness and happiness" for his safety after the Battle of the Baltic; and the third time, at the close of 1801, asking that the past might be forgotten and the breach between them healed. In doing this, Frances Nelson showed herself the reverse of an unforgiving and indignant wife, for Nelson's last letter to her, in March of the same year, had been

very harsh in tone, and he had ended by saying, "Living, I have done all in my power for you, and if dead, you will find I have done the same; therefore, my only wish is to be left to myself."

There is another allusion to his wife in a letter Nelson wrote Emma in the September of 1801:—

"I had, yesterday, a letter from my father; he seems to think, that he may do something which I shall not like. I suppose, he means, going to Somerset Street. Shall I, to an old man, enter upon the detestable subject; it may shorten his days. But, I think, I shall tell him, that I cannot go to Somerset Street, to see him. But, I shall not write till I hear your opinion. If I once begin, you know, it will *all out*, about her, and her ill-treatment to her son. But, you shall decide."

Neither Nelson nor Emma, once the break was made, showed any feeling for Lady Nelson's position. Emma, with jarring bad taste, gave her the nickname of "Tom-Tit," and writing in February, shortly after Nelson's separation from his wife, she says, "Tom-tit does not come to town. She offered to go down, but was refused. She only wanted to go, to do mischief to all the great Jove's relations. 'Tis now shewn, all her ill-treatment and bad *heart*. *Jove* has found it out." Jove was the name Nelson was sometimes called by his family, in allusion to his title of

Bronte—the Thunderer. On another occasion, writing to Mrs. William Nelson, whom she vows is so "congenial," Emma says, "Not so with *Tom Tit*, for their was an antipathy not to be described."

Lady Nelson had not the temperament to make many friendships, but Nelson's father always clung to her, and Hardy, in spite of his immense attachment to Nelson, took her side entirely in the quarrel, and continued to pay her attention when her husband had deserted her. In his "Letters" there are several allusions to her; in one, written in the summer of 1802, he says: "I breakfasted this morning with Lady Nelson. I am more pleased with her if possible than ever.; she certainly is one of the Best Women in the World." Even when dismissed so unwarrantably from any further share in her husband's life, Lady Nelson seems to have cherished no bitter feelings. Sir William Hotham, who knew her till her death in 1831, said: "She continually talked of him, and always attempted to palliate his conduct towards her, was warm and enthusiastic in her praises of his public achievements, and bowed down with dignified submission to the errors of his domestic life." In later years she lived with her son and his family, and her eldest grandchild remembered all her life how her grandmother had constantly with her a miniature of Nelson, at which she used to look long and

sadly, and how she would say, "When you are older, little Fan, you too may know what it is to have a broken heart."

And so Frances Nelson passed out of Nelson's life. She was not the stuff from which heroes' wives are made; she lacked fire, enthusiasm, passion; but, according to the light that was in her, she loved Nelson. Such women are doomed, however, to be eclipsed by the Emmas of the world.

Having broken finally and completely with his wife, Nelson was drawn still more closely to the woman who was now everything to him, for at the end of January, 1801, their child, Horatia, was born. With extraordinary adroitness, Emma Hamilton contrived to conceal this by no means trifling incident from the knowledge of all save her mother, Mrs. Cadogan, and possibly a few servants. She retired to her room under the pretext of a severe cold, and for a few days refused to see any one. The physical and moral hardihood involved are alike astonishing. Sir William Hamilton was, of course, in the house, and apparently guessed nothing; while in little over a week after her confinement Lady Hamilton herself took the baby and placed her in the charge of a foster-mother, who cared for the child for a year or two. Later on the little Horatia was brought openly to Sir William Hamilton's house, though, of course, her presence was accounted for

by a train of fictitious circumstances. But thenceforward Nelson and Emma involved themselves in a cloud of dissimulation, and the extraordinary success with which she practised the art of deceit is shown by the fact, that to the end of her long life, Horatia (who became Mrs. Ward) was firmly convinced that Lady Hamilton was not her mother. Writing to Sir Harris Nicolas, in a letter recently discovered by Mr. E. S. P. Haynes, Horatia Ward says—

"Would she (*i.e.* Lady Hamilton) have dared to have a child brought constantly to her husband's house had she had a nearer interest in it than that of friendship to whom it belonged? It has always appeared to me that she was just the woman who, to gain a stronger hold on Lord Nelson's affection, would be likely to undertake the care of a child which he might feel anxious about, to show herself above common jealousies. The only quarrel which I ever heard between Lady H. and her mother took place when we lived at Richmond, when I suppose I had been very naughty, for I was in sad disgrace, and had received a most pathetic lecture on the error of my conduct. Mrs. Cadogan pleaded for me, saying that I had done nothing requiring such a severe scolding, when Lady H. became angry, and said that she alone had authority over me. Mrs. Cadogan, rather irritated, said, 'Really, Emma, you make as much fuss about the child as if she

were your own daughter,' when Lady H. turned round, much incensed as I was present, and replied, 'Perhaps she is.' Mrs. Cadogan looked at her and replied: 'Emma, that will not do with me; you know that I know better.' Lady H. then ordered me out of the room. On her death-bed, at Calais, I earnestly prayed her to tell me who my mother was, but she would not, influenced then, I think, by the fear that I might leave her."

During the ordeal of Emma's secret confinement, Nelson, who had hoisted his flag as Second-in-Command of the Channel Fleet, was at Plymouth, expecting day by day the orders that would take him from England to strike at the Northern Coalition, for as he said in one of his letters, "We are now arrived at that period, what we have often heard of, but must now execute—that of fighting for our dear Country." It was a cruel situation for both of them; but they had foreseen it, and provided themselves with a means of communicating freely. It was not safe in letters which might be seen by other eyes to refer openly to the expected child which was officially non-existent. Yet the anxious father must have news. So a Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were invented—Thompson supposed to be an officer in Nelson's own ship, his wife on shore under Lady Hamilton's special protection and care. Thus, under other names, Nelson and Emma were able to express their own feelings

and agitations. The first reference to the Thompsons occurs in a letter from the Admiral to Lady Hamilton, dated the 25th of January, when he did not know whether the child was yet born or how the mother fared: "I delivered poor Mrs. Thompson's note," he tells her; "her friend is truly thankful for her kindness and your goodness. Who does not admire your benevolent heart? Poor man, he is very anxious, and begs you will, if she is not able, write a line just to comfort him. He appears to feel very much her situation. He is so agitated, and will be so for 2 or 3 days, that he says he cannot write, and that I must send his kind love and affectionate regards." In a letter three days later he says: "I have this moment seen Mrs. Thompson's friend. Poor fellow! he seems very uneasy and melancholy. He begs you to be kind to her! and I have assured him of your readiness to relieve the dear, good woman."

When the news of the child's birth reached him, Nelson gave expression to his own gladness and relief under the assumed name.

"I believe," he wrote to the Emma, who was also "Mrs. Thompson," "dear Mrs. Thompson's friend will go mad with joy. He cries, prays, and performs all tricks, yet dares not show all or any of his feelings, but he has only me to consult with. He swears he will drink your health this day in a bumper, and damn me if I

don't join him in spite of all the doctors in Europe, for none regard you with truer affection than myself. You are a dear good creature, and your kindness and attention to poor Mrs. T. stamps you higher than ever in my mind. I cannot write, I am so agitated by this young man at my elbow. I believe he is foolish, he does nothing but rave about you and her. I own I participate in his joy and cannot write anything."

In another and later letter he wrote direct to Mrs. Thompson in his own name and person—

"I sit down, my dear Mrs. T.," he says, "by desire of poor Thompson, to write you a line: not to assure you of his eternal love and affection for you and his dear child, but only to say that he is well and as happy as he can be, separated from all which he holds dear in this world. He has no thoughts separated from your love and your interest. They are united with his; one fate, one destiny, he assures me, awaits you both. What can I say more? Only to kiss his child for him: and love him as truly, sincerely, and faithfully as he does you; which is from the bottom of his soul. He desires that you will more and more attach yourself to dear Lady Hamilton."

Thus the Thompson fiction was varied; though with the excitability and lack of caution which might be expected from Nelson under such circumstances, the disguise at times wears very thin. But in one respect he showed considerable

self-control—he burnt all Lady Hamilton's letters to him at this time, and that is the reason we only possess his side of the correspondence. "I burn all your dear letters, because it is right for your sake," he told her on the 1st of March, "and I wish you would burn all mine—they can do no good, and will do us both harm, if any seizure of them, or the dropping even one of them, would fill the mouths of the world sooner than we intend." Emma disobeyed his wishes in this respect, for she kept his letters to her, both those addressed to her as Mrs. Thompson and in her own name. Probably she felt unequal to the sacrifice of destroying them; possibly—and the suspicion is not entirely unjustified in view of some of her later actions—she thought they might have some future value. There is every reason to believe that Nelson's love for her was far more deep-rooted, far more an essential part of his nature, than hers for him. It was his first and his only real passion: it was not hers—long ago Charles Greville had had the best of her heart.

In those letters to her, which are not primarily love-letters, Nelson says some fine and characteristic things. In one of them, dated February 8th, he writes—

"I am not in very good spirits; and, except that our Country demands all our services and abilities, to bring about an honourable Peace,

nothing should prevent my being the bearer of my own letter. But, my dear friend, I know you are so true and loyal an Englishwoman, that you would hate those who would not stand forth in defence of our King, Laws, Religion, and all that is dear to us. It is your sex that make us go forth; and seem to tell us—'None but the brave deserve the fair!' and, if we fall, we still live in the hearts of those females, who are dear to us. It is your sex that rewards us; it is your sex who cherish our memories; and you, my dear, honoured friend, are, believe me, the *first*, the best of your sex. I have been the world around, and in every corner of it, and never yet saw your equal, or even one which could be put in comparison with you. You know how to reward virtue, honour, and courage; and never to ask if it is placed in a Prince, Duke, Lord, or Peasant."

Lady Hamilton expressed her feelings about Nelson with her usual freedom to her intimate friend, Mrs. William Nelson, the wife of the admiral's brother. Writing towards the end of February, she says: "I received yesterday Letters from that great *adored being*, that we all so Love, esteem, and admire. The more one knows him, the more one wonders at his greatness; his heart, his head, booth so perfect." Then she indulges in a little outburst which reminds one of her statement many years earlier to Greville, that "the wild, unthinking Emma has turned philosopher."

"I miss our little friendly confidential chats," she tells Mrs. Nelson; "but in this world nothing is compleat. If all went on smoothly, one shou'd regret quitting it, but 'tis the many little vexations and crosses, separations from one's dear friends, that makes one not regret leaving it."

Before going to the Baltic, Nelson had three days' leave of absence, and came up to London to see Emma, and—in secret—his child: the child that he already regarded with such passionate affection. In later times, while the little Horatia was still under the care of the foster-mother, Mrs. Gibson, she used to tell how Nelson, "often came alone, and played for hours with the infant on the floor, calling her his own child." It is a new aspect of Nelson's character, but the desire for a child to call his own had always been with him; and as he held his little Horatia upon his knee, he may have felt, in spite of that consuming passion for glory which had driven him all his life to great actions—

> "How vainly men themselves amaze,
> To win the palm, the oak, or bays."

Records of this short visit are preserved in Emma's letters to Mrs. William Nelson. The day after his arrival she writes: "Our dear Nelson is very well in health. Poor fellow, he travelled allmost all night, but you that know his great, good heart will not be surprised at any act of friendship *of his*." The day after she

continues: "Oh, my dearest friend, our dear Lord is just *come in.* He goes off to-night and sails immediately. My heart is fit *to Burst* quite with greef. Oh, what pain, God only knows! I can only say, may the Allmighty God bless, prosper, and protect him. I shall go mad with grief. Oh, God only knows what it is to part with such a *friend, such a one.* We were truly called the '*Tria Juncta in uno*,' for Sir William, *he,* and I have but one *heart in three bodies.*" After Nelson's departure Emma writes again: "Anxiety and heart-bleedings for your dear brother's departure has made me so ill, I have not been able to write. I cannot eat or sleep. Oh, may God prosper and *bless him!*"

Before Nelson came up to town the Hamiltons had moved from the house in Grosvenor Square, lent them by William Beckford, to a house of their own in Piccadilly—Emma selling some of her valuable diamonds in order to furnish it in suitable splendour. Nelson might be sighing for her at sea, and she might consider herself prostrate with grief over his absence, but she meant to take advantage, nevertheless, of the pleasures of London society, and was bent on entertaining. It will be remembered that Mr. Elliot had prophesied of her at Dresden, "She will captivate the Prince of Wales, whose mind is as vulgar as her own, and play a great part in England." A portion of this prophecy

threatened to come true, for shortly after moving into their new house the Hamiltons were informed that the Prince desired to dine with them and have the pleasure of hearing Emma sing. Sir William Hamilton wrote to inform Nelson of this fact, telling him—

"We have been drawn in to be under the *absolute necessity* of giving a dinner to the P. of Wales on Sunday next. He asked it himself, having expressed a strong desire of hearing Banti's and Emma's voices together. I am well aware of the dangers . . . Not that I fear, that Emma could ever be induced to act contrary to the prudent conduct she has hitherto pursued; but the world is so ill-natured, that the worst construction is put upon the most innocent actions. As this dinner must be, or he would be offended, I shall keep strictly to the musical part, invite only Banti, her husband, and Taylor; and as I wish to show a civility to Davison, I have sent him an invitation. In short, we will get rid of it as well as we can, and guard against its producing more meetings of the same sort. Emma would really have gone any lengths to have avoided Sunday's dinner. But I thought it would not be prudent to break with the P. of Wales; who, really, has shewn the greatest civility to us, when we were last in England, and since we returned: and she has, at last, acquiesced to my opinion."

This news affected Nelson violently. His frantic anxiety that Emma should not be contaminated would be ludicrous were it not so pitiable as showing how his love had idealized and glorified her into something almost saintly. He wrote distractedly—

"You are too beautiful not to have enemies, and even one visit will stamp you. . . . But, my dear friend, I know you too well not to be convinced you cannot be seduced by any prince in Europe. You are, in my opinion, the pattern of perfection." But in spite of this profession of faith, he cries, "The thought so agitates me that I cannot write. I had wrote a few lines last night but I am in tears, I cannot bear it." And again, "I own I sometimes fear that you will not be so true to me as I am to you, yet I cannot, will not believe, you can be false. No! I judge you by myself. I hope to be dead before that should happen, but it will not. Forgive me, Emma, oh, forgive your own dear, disinterested Nelson." He cannot reconcile his mind to the thought of the projected dinner-party, it preys upon him like a nightmare. "I am so agitated that I can write nothing. I knew it would be so, and you can't help it. Do not sit long at table. Good God! He will be next you, and telling you soft things. . . . Oh, God! that I was dead! But I do not, my dearest Emma, blame you, nor do I fear your constancy. . . . I

am gone almost mad, but you cannot help it. It will be in all the newspapers with hints." He has heard, he says, that the words of the Prince of Wales are so charming that no person can withstand them: "No one, not even Emma, could resist the serpent's flattering tongue." Then he breaks out into a melancholy strain that recalls Ophelia's wandering words, "I know my Emma, and don't forget that you had once a Nelson, a friend, a dear friend, but alas! he has his misfortunes. He has lost the best, his only friend, his only love. Don't forget him, poor fellow! He is honest. Oh! I could thunder and strike dead with my lightning." After he comes back a little to his senses, he writes: "Forgive my letter wrote and sent last night, perhaps my head was a little affected. No wonder, it was such an unexpected, such a knock-down blow; such a death. But I will not go on, for I shall get out of my senses again."

And after all this the tragedy was avoided, the dinner-party did not take place. Emma wrote to her friend, Mrs. William Nelson, on the 20th of February: "I am so unwell that we cannot have his Royal Highness to dinner on Sunday, which *will* NOT vex me." But it is very evident that she had not expended upon the episode any of the anxiety and perturbation of spirit that almost tore Nelson in pieces. The admiral was as relieved as he had been agitated.

AS "ST. CECILIA"

GEORGE ROMNEY

"I glory in your conduct," he told her, "and in your inestimable friendship. . . . I wish you were my sister that I might instantly give you half my fortune for your glorious conduct. Be firm! Your cause is that of honour against infamy." The affair made such an impression upon his mind, that some weeks later he was still harping upon it: "I now know he never can dine with you; for you would go out of the house sooner than suffer it: and as to letting him hear you sing, I only hope he will be struck deaf and you dumb, sooner than such a thing should happen!"

The violence of Nelson's feeling on this matter is shown by the violence of his words.

The flutter of this Prince of Wales episode was barely over when Nelson wrote Emma a letter which places their relations to each other and to the child Horatia beyond all possibility of doubt. The Thompson fiction was dropped in this letter, for it was not to be trusted to the post but to the hands of a faithful messenger. The letter is dated March 1, 1801—

"Now, my own dear wife, for such you are in my eyes and in the face of Heaven, I can give full scope to my feelings, for I dare say Oliver will faithfully deliver this letter. You know, my dearest Emma, that there is nothing in this world that I would not do for us to live together, and to have our dear little child with

us. . . . I love, I never did love any one else. I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one; and you, thank my God, never gave one to anybody else." [Nelson here shows that he had been kept considerably in the dark as to certain happenings of Emma's past.] "I think before March is out you will either see us back, or so victorious that we shall ensure a glorious issue to our toils. Think what my Emma will feel at seeing return safe, perhaps with a little more fame, her own dear loving Nelson. Never, if I can help it, will I dine out of my ship or go on shore, except duty calls me. Let Sir Hyde have any glory he can catch—I envy him not. You, my beloved Emma, and my country are the two dearest objects of my fond heart—*a heart susceptible and true.* Only place confidence in me, and you never shall be disappointed. . . . May the Heavens bless you, My love, my darling angel, my heaven-given wife, the dearest, only true wife of her own till death,—Nelson and Bronte." In the postscript he adds: "The time will ere long arrive when Nelson will land to fly to his Emma, to be for ever with her. Let that hope keep us up under our present difficulties. Kiss and bless *our* dear Horatia—think of that."

Truly Nelson was at one with Shakespeare, when he wrote—

> "Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments."

CHAPTER XIV

TO THE LAST BATTLE

NELSON sailed from Yarmouth in the *St. George* on the 12th of March, 1801, to engage in the second of his three great battles. Sir Hyde Parker was nominally commander-in-chief; but, as Nelson wrote to Emma: "You say, my dearest Friend, why don't I put my Chief forward? He has put me in the front of the battle, and Nelson will be first." There was considerable truth in Lady Malmesbury's comment after the battle: "I feel very sorry for Sir Hyde," she said; "but no wise man would ever have gone with Nelson, or over him, as he was sure to be in the background in every case." Even at the outset Nelson did not get on very well with his commander-in-chief. He was constitutionally impatient of control, and where his brilliant genius led him he followed fast—not waiting for the laggard footsteps or the late-given approval of commonplace and uninspired superiors. "Sir Hyde Parker," he told Emma, "had run his pen through all that could do me

credit, or give me support; but never mind, Nelson will be first if he lives, and you shall partake of all his glory. So it shall be my study to distinguish myself, that your heart shall leap for joy when my name is mentioned." In another letter written about this time, he said, with all his old picturesque spirit: "The Dane should see our Flag waving every moment he lifted up his head." And with characteristic self-confidence he told Emma: "Your Nelson's plans are bold and decisive—all on the great scale. I hate your pen-and-ink men; a fleet of British ships of war are the best negotiators in Europe."

The story of "Nelson and the North," with all its picturesque and fiery incidents, the fleet sailing up the Sound, past "thy wild and stormy steep, Elsinore," the hard-fought action, the disregarded signal fluttering in vain its message of recall while the guns "spread a death-shade round the ships," the triumphant truce—all these things belong to the history of Nelson's professional career, and are enshrined for popular remembrance in the lines of a famous ballad.

After this victory we have no letter such as Emma wrote Nelson after the Battle of the Nile, owing to his scrupulous care to destroy her letters. But Sir William Hamilton gives some little picture of her agitation—she was still "the

same Emma," still ardent, exclamatory, enthusiastic as a schoolgirl.

"What can I say, my Dear Lord!" asks Sir William, "that would convey the smallest idea of what we felt yesterday, on receiving the authentic letters confirming your late most glorious victory. . . . We can only repeat what we know well, and often said before—that Nelson *was, is,* and to the *last* will ever be, *the first.* However, we all agree that, when we get you safe home once more—that you should never more risk your shattered frame. . . . You would have laughed to have seen what I saw yesterday! *Emma* did not know whether she was on her head or heels—in such a hurry to tell your great news, that she could utter nothing but tears of joy and tenderness."

Nelson was kept in the North some months after the battle, and when off Rostock, on the 24th of May, he wrote to Emma—

"My Dearest Beloved Friend,—Yesterday I joined Adml. Totty, when I found little Parker with all my treasures, your dear kind friendly letters, your picture as Santa Emma, for a Santa you are if ever there was one in this world; for what makes a saint, the being so much better than the rest of the human race; therefore as truly as I believe in God do I believe you are a Saint, and in this age of wickedness you sett

an example of real Virtue and goodness which, if we are not too far sunk in Luxury and Infamy, ought to rouse up almost forgot Virtue, and may God's curse alight upon those who want to draw you, my dearest friend, from a quiet home into the company of men and women of bad character, and I am one of those who believe that in England the higher the class the worse the company. I speak generally. I will not think so bad of any class but that there may be some good individuals in it. How can I sufficiently thank you for all your goodness and kindness to me, a forlorn outcast except in your generous soul? My health I have represented to the admiralty in such terms that I have no doubt but an Admiral has sailed to take my place. The *Harpy* has carried a stronger letter than any of the former. This vessel states that I do not know that I shall go to sea again, as my health requires the shore and gentle exercise, and so it does; and really, if the Admiralty had allowed me to go home, and in the event of hostilities being renewed in the Baltic, I might perhaps in that case care to command the fleet, but the Baltic folks will never fight me if it is to be avoided. In my humble opinion we shall have peace with the northern powers if we are *Just* in our desires. . . . I want not to conquer any heart if that which I have conquered is happy in its lot. I am confident, for the conqueror is

become the *Conquered.* I want but one true heart. There can be but one love, although many real well-wishers."

But he was kept from the sight of Emma till his successor could be found, and that, as Earl St. Vincent told him, "your lordship knows is no easy task; for I never saw the man in our profession, excepting yourself and Troubridge, who possessed the magic art of infusing the same spirit into others which inspired their own actions; exclusive of other talents and habits of business, not common to naval characters." But at last his successor was appointed, and Nelson wrote to Lady Hamilton :—

"I was so overcome yesterday with the good and happy news that came about my going home, that I believe I was in truth scarcely myself. The thoughts of going do me good, yet all night I was so restless that I could not sleep. It is nearly calm, therefore Admiral Pole cannot get on. If he was not to come, I believe it would kill me. I am ready to start the moment I have talked with him one hour."

Nelson landed at Yarmouth on the 1st of July, and joined the Hamiltons. But as London is not ideal in midsummer, they all went into the country; first to Box Hill for a few days, and then to the Bush Inn at Staines, which Emma called "a delightful place, well situated, and a

good garden on the Thames." Nelson and the Hamiltons were accompanied by the Reverend William Nelson, with his wife and daughter Charlotte, and "the brave little Parker, who afterwards lost his life in that bold, excellent and vigorous attack at Boulogne, where such unexampled bravery was shown by our brave Nelson's followers"—to use Emma's words. The Duke of Queensberry and Lord William Gordon had been invited to join the party, but were unable to do so. Lord William Gordon, in reply, wrote Emma some very indifferent verses, in which he took off the characteristics of all the little company—with the exception of herself and Nelson, who went under the name of "Henry"—

> "For thee and Henry, silent are our lays;
> Thy beauty and his valour mock all praise."

Verse-making seemed to be a popular pastime with the Hamilton-Nelson circle. Miss Cornelia Knight, it will be remembered, had written many songs in praise of the admiral, while Emma, in later years, wrote little poems about him. But the odd, the incongruous thing is that Nelson himself took to making verses. Love plays many strange pranks, but surely never a stranger one than this which set the great admiral hunting for rhymes instead of for the ships of the enemy. Quite early in 1801, shortly after the birth of Horatia, he sent to Lady Hamilton, "a few lines, wrote in

the late gale: which I think, you will not disapprove." The best of these verses is perhaps the following:—

> "A heart *susceptible*, sincere, and true;
> A heart, by fate, and nature, torn in two:
> One half to duty and his country due;
> The other *better half* to love and you!"

But this is not the aspect of Nelson's character upon which his country most loves to dwell. And he was soon called back to the sterner side of life. There was a sudden panic fear of a French invasion, and Nelson had to take the command of the coast, from Beachy Head to Orford Ness. As Captain Mahan says—

"Reputation such as his bears its own penalty. There was no other man in whose name England could find the calm certainty of safety, which popular apprehension demanded in the new emergency, that had arisen while he was upholding her cause in the northern seas. Nelson repined, but he submitted. Within four weeks his flag was flying again, and himself immersed in professional anxieties."

Invasion in 1801 was not the real danger it was in 1803–1805. It was a somewhat idle threat of Buonaparte's, who was puzzled how to strike effectively at England, and found himself constantly baffled by the slow but irresistible workings of the English sea-power. That, as Nelson so fully recognized, was "literally the

foundation of our fabric of defence." He was little troubled by the invasion scare, though quite ready to take all reasonable precautions. "I agree perfectly with you," he wrote to St. Vincent, "that we must keep the enemy as far from our own coasts as possible, and be able to attack them the moment they come out of their ports." Indeed, he did not wait for the French to come out of their ports; instead of waiting he planned and carried out the attack on the Boulogne flotilla, which ended in such a disastrous repulse. But Nelson could be as great in failure as in success, as he proved in the night-attack on Teneriffe years before. Professor Knox Laughton says of the Boulogne failure, "There was no petty grumbling, no attempt to shirk the responsibility. What had been done was his; his the blame, if there were any; to his followers the credit of unflinching bravery and devotion."

But through all these excitements and dangers Nelson's thoughts were constantly with Emma, who seems to have been capable of expressing jealousy, in spite of the admiral's whole-hearted devotion. "You need not fear all the women in this world," he assures her, "for all others, except yourself, are pests to me. I know but one; for, who can be like my Emma? I am confident, you will do nothing which can hurt my feelings." He was willing to make himself a hermit in his ship, so that her suspicions might be soothed. In one

letter he tells her, "The Mayor and Corporation of Sandwich, when they came on board to present me the Freedom of that ancient Town, requested me to dine with them. I put them off for the moment, but they would not be let off. Therefore, this business, *dreadful* to me, stands over, and I shall be attacked again when I get to the Downs. But I will not dine there, without you say, approve; nor, perhaps, then, if I can get off. Oh! how I hate to be stared at!"

His chivalry towards one woman apparently drove him into being rude to all others. From the *Medusa* in the Downs, he wrote to Lady Hamilton, on the 31st of August—

"Oh! how bad the weather is! The devils, here, wanted to plague my soul out, yesterday, just after dinner; but I would have seen them damned, before they should have come in. The Countess Mountmorris, Lady this, that, and t'other, came alongside, a Mr. Lubbock with them —to desire they might come in. I sent word, I was so busy that no persons could be admitted, as my time was employed in the King's service. Then they sent their names, which I cared not for; and sent Captain Gore, to say it is impossible; and that if they wanted to see a ship, they had better go to the *Overyssel* (a sixty-four in the Downs). They said, no; they wanted to see me. However, I was stout, and will not be shown about like a *beast!* and away they went."

Nelson was strangely changed in some respects, though the excuse must be made for him that in the same letter he declared, "I am so dreadfully sea-sick, that I cannot hold up my head!" Also after the Boulogne expedition he was fretting for a sight of Emma, fretting because the promised visit which she and Sir William were to pay to Deal was delayed. "I came on board," he says, "but no Emma. I have 4 pictures, but I have lost the original." Again he tells her: "Our separation is terrible, my heart is ready to flow out of my eyes. I am not unwell, but I am very low. I can only account for it by my absence from all I hold dear in this world." About this time Emma appears to have expressed some nervous fears as to his personal safety. Nelson answered her with all his old fine spirit and love of duty:

"You ask me, my dear Friend, if I am going on more Expeditions? And, even if I was to forfeit your friendship, which is dearer to me than all the world, I can tell you nothing. For, I go out; if I see the Enemy, and can get at them, it is my duty: and you would naturally hate me if I kept back one moment. I long to pay them, for their tricks t' other day, the debt of a drubbing, which, surely, I'll pay: but *when, where, or how*, it is impossible, your own good sense must tell you, for me or mortal man to say."

At this time he was very anxious about one of

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his young officers, Commander Edward Parker, who was specially dear to him, and who had been seriously—and as it later proved, fatally—wounded in the unsuccessful boat attack on Boulogne. In September, Sir William and Lady Hamilton came to Deal for a fortnight, and during this time Nelson and Emma were constantly at the bedside of poor young Parker, of whom Nelson said characteristically, "He is my child, for I found him in distress." Parker rallied for a time, but on the 20th of September he became rapidly worse, and on the same day Lady Hamilton had returned to London. These two events weighed heavily on Nelson's spirits. "I came on board, but no Emma," he told her. "No, no, my heart will break. I am in silent distraction. . . . My dearest wife, how can I bear our separation? Good God, what a change! I am so low that I cannot hold up my head." A few days later Parker died. "It was, they tell me," said Nelson, "a happy release; but I cannot bring myself to say I am glad he is gone; it would be a lie, for I am grieved almost to death."

Nelson was himself very much out of health, and angry at being kept so long at his cold and unsatisfactory post, away from the comforts of home and the presence of Emma. He refused to believe that Lord St. Vincent and Sir Thomas Troubridge (who was then at the Admiralty) kept him at sea for public reasons; he thought,

in the distemper of his mind, that it was to prevent his being with Lady Hamilton. Against his old friend and comrade-in-arms, Troubridge, he was particularly bitter; perhaps because Troubridge, with characteristic courage and honesty, had ventured to protest earlier against Lady Hamilton's undue influence. To Emma he wrote, at the beginning of October: "Troubridge has so completely prevented my mentioning any body's service, that I am become a cypher, and he has gained a victory over Nelson's spirit. Captain Somerville, has been begging me to intercede with the Admiralty again; but I have been so *rebuffed*, that my spirits are gone, and the *great* Troubridge has what we call *cowed* the spirits of Nelson; but I shall never forget it." Even Troubridge's kind suggestions were twisted into scorn. "I have a letter from Troubridge, recommending me to wear flannel shirts. Does he care for me? *No;* but never mind." Again, "*Troubridge* writes me, that as the weather is set in fine again, he hopes I shall get *walks* on shore. He is, I suppose, laughing at me; but, never mind."

Thus Nelson, like "poor Brutus—with himself at war, forgot the shows of love to other men."

But after the preliminaries to the Peace of Amiens were signed there was no longer any reason, real or imaginary, why Nelson should not

return to his friends. "Only two days more," he writes to Lady Hamilton, on the 20th of October, "the Admiralty could, with any conscience, keep me here; not that I think they have had any conscience. I dare say, Master Troubridge is grown fat. I know I am grown lean with my complaint, which, but for their indifference about my health, would never have happened; or, at least, I should have got well long ago in a warm room, with a good fire, and sincere friends." He might well pine for a fire, for he suffered greatly from the bitter weather, and wrote to Emma on the very day before he left his flagship: "I am literally starving with cold; but my heart is warm."

This time when he went ashore it was not to the Hamiltons' house in Piccadilly, but to a home of his own. Even before the Battle of the Baltic he had been discussing with Emma the possibility and the advantages of such a project, and it was in Emma's hands that he left the whole business; she was to find a house for him, buy it, and furnish it to their joint liking. This she did with all the capability she displayed in the practical affairs of life. Merton Place, in Surrey, was the house chosen, and for the few years that remained to him on earth, "dear, dear Merton" was to Nelson the centre of his happiness, the ideal country home for which the heart of a sea-sick sailor was always longing.

Almost all that made Merton has now vanished—swallowed up by the bricks and mortar of encroaching London. But when Nelson bought it, the place was in the midst of green fields and pleasant woods; a stream ran through the grounds which he and Emma christened "The Nile." The house itself was spacious, comfortable, plain. The grounds were extensive and stocked with all sorts of farm creatures by Emma. "I expect, that all animals will increase where you are," Nelson told her in one of his letters, "for I never expect that you will suffer any to be killed." In another letter he declares, "I am sure, you have as fine a taste in laying out the land, as you have in music." In his eyes Emma could do everything—and nothing ill.

Sir William Hamilton was inclined to joke the admiral about his implicit faith in Emma.

"We have now inhabited your Lordship's premises for some days," he wrote, "and I can now speak with some certainty. I have lived with our dear Emma several years, I know her merit, have a great opinion of the head and heart God Almighty has been pleased to give her, but a seaman alone could have given a fine woman full power to choose and fit up a residence for him, without seeing it himself. You are in luck, for on my conscience, I verily believe that a place so suitable to your views could not have been found and at so cheap a rate. For, if you

stay away three days longer, I do not think you can have any wish but you will find compleated here. And then the bargain was fortunately struck three days before an idea of peace got about. *Now*, every estate in this neighbourhood has increased in value, . . . I never saw so many conveniences united in so small a compass. You have nothing but to come and to enjoy immediately. You have a good mile of pleasant dry walk around your farm. It would make you laugh to see Emma and her mother fitting up pigstyes and hencoops, and already the Canal is enlivened with ducks, and the cock is strutting with his hen about the walks."

Even before he had seen the home that Emma had chosen and arranged for him, Nelson's thoughts were constantly occupied in picturing it and the woman who was its presiding genius: "I assure you, my dear friend, that I had rather read and hear all your little story of a white hen getting into a tree, an anecdote of Fatima, or hear you call—'Cupidy! Cupidy!' than any speech I shall hear in parliament; because I know, although you can adapt your language and manners to a child, yet that you can also thunder forth such a torrent of eloquence, that corruption and infamy would sink before your voice, in however *exalted* a situation it might be placed,"—another allusion to the Prince of Wales episode which had made such a deep impression

on Nelson's mind. He told her that she was to be "Lady Paramount of all the territories and waters of Merton."

At Merton, Nelson meant to begin a new and happier life with his beloved Emma and with Sir William Hamilton, though the old diplomat was only a figure in the background; indispensable, in a way, because he gave the curious household a veneer of propriety; cherished after a fashion and affectionately regarded by the two who had so seriously wronged him, but a negligible quantity in the thoughts of his wife and of Nelson, and never seriously considered in their scheme of things. This came naturally enough to Emma, who, all her life, had defied ordinary standards of conduct; but Nelson was the son of a clergyman, and had been brought up in a different atmosphere. So in his new home—the first real home he had ever had on English soil—he wished that everything should be good and seemly. The essential blot, the real wrong, he could not or would not remove; but with that curious moral perversion of which the human mind is capable he asked Emma the question, which, seen truly, is really pathetic, "Have we a nice church at Merton? We will set an example of goodness to the under parishioners."

When at length he reached Merton he found it all his hopes had pictured, and soon his

"MEDITATION"

ENGRAVED BY S. PHILLIPS FROM A DRAWING BY R. WESTALL, R.A.

relations were gathered round his hospitable hearth. Lady Hamilton wrote to Mrs. William Nelson within a week or two of the admiral's arrival—

"He *has* been *very, very* happy since he arrived, and Charlotte [Nelson's niece] *has* been very attentive to him. Indeed we *all* make it our constant business to make him *happy*. Sir William is fonder than ever, and we manage very well in regard to our establishment, pay share and share alike, so it comes easy to booth partys. . . . We were all at church, and Charlotte turned over the prayers for her uncle. As to Sir William, they are the greatest friends in the world. . . . Sir William and Charlotte caught 3 large pike. She helps him and milord with their great *coats on;* so now I have nothing to do."

This is an idyllic picture of country peace and an united household. The impression is further heightened by a simple old-world letter from Nelson's father to Lady Hamilton, written in January, 1802—

"Madam,—Your polite congratulations upon the entrance of a new year, I return seven-fold to you, and the whole of the party now under the hospitable roof of Merton Place. Time is a sacred deposit committed to our trust; and, hereafter, we must account for the use we have

made of it. To me, a large portion of this treasure has already been granted, even seventy-nine years. The complaint my dear son has felt is, I know, very, very painful: and can be removed, only, with much care and caution; not venturing, without a thick covering, both head and feet, even to admire your parterres of snow-drops, which now appear in all their splendour. The white robe which *January* wears, be-spangled with ice, is handsome to look at; but we must not approach too near *her*. I shall be very glad to know the Lord of Merton is recovered. I am, Madam, your most humble servant. EDM. NELSON"

Just before Nelson first came to Merton he wrote to Emma, begging that he might not be "annoyed" on his arrival with visitors and strangers; "it is retirement with my friends, that I wish for." That was a genuine expression of his wishes and feelings; all his life he was well content with the dinner of herbs where love is—but not so Emma. In the simple old Edgware Row days, when one man's approval had made up the sum of her happiness, she had found content in small things; but Italy and the atmosphere of a Court had spoiled her. She had grown to like a lavish show, an exuberant and expensive hospitality. Nelson had assured her, in the blindness of his heart, during the purchase

and preparation of Merton, "You will make us rich with your economies." But economy and Emma—after her early days—were barely on speaking terms. Like most women, she enjoyed planning and contriving something out of nothing, and she was always ready to work with her hands; but any saving she effected thereby was erased by some lavish expenditure soon afterwards. At Merton, in Nelson's name, she kept a most liberal table, as the heavy weekly bills show, and she was not satisfied lest many guests graced the well-provided board. So expenses grew, and the quiet country home became as full of noise and society as any town house. Nelson yielded his wishes to hers without a murmur—apparently all was well so long as the "Lady Paramount" was happy.

But Sir William was not so well pleased. Old age had crept fast upon him; he began to feel that his days were numbered, and he wished to spend the few remaining to him in the ways and pursuits for which he most cared. "It is but reasonable," he wrote to his nephew, Charles Greville, in January, 1802, "after having fagged all my life, that my last days should pass off comfortably and quietly." The reasonableness of this desire Emma apparently could not see: she was so wrapped up in herself and in Nelson, she was so eminently satisfied with the large and easy way of living at Merton, that she ignored

her husband's growing dissatisfaction. At last Sir William was driven to put the case before her in writing, which he did with great restraint and kind feeling; nevertheless, the document is illuminating, and it is particularly interesting as being practically the last time in which the old diplomatist emerges from the background to which he had been tacitly relegated by his wife and his "best friend"—

"I have passed the last 40 years of my life in the hurry and bustle that must necessarily be attendant on a publick character. I am arrived at the age when some repose is really necessary, and I promised myself a quiet home, and altho' I was sensible, and said so when I married, that I shou'd be superannuated when my wife wou'd be in her full beauty and vigour of youth. That time is arrived, and we must make the best of it for the comfort of both parties. Unfortunately our tastes as to the manner of living are very different. I by no means wish to live in solitary retreat, but to have seldom less than 12 or 14 at table, and those varying continually, is coming back to what was become so irksome to me in Italy during the latter years of my residence in that country. I have no connections out of my own family. I have no complaint to make, but I feel that the whole attention of my wife is given to Lord N. and his interest at Merton. I well know the purity of Lord N.'s friendship for

Emma and me, and I know how very uncomfortable it wou'd make his Lp., our best friend, if a separation shou'd take place, and am therefore determined to do all in my power to prevent such an extremity, which wou'd be *essentially detrimental* to all parties, but wou'd be more sensibly felt by our dear friend than by us. Provided that our expences in housekeeping do not encrease beyond measure (of which I must own I see some danger), I am willing to go upon our present footing; but as I cannot expect to live many years, every moment to me is precious, and I hope I may be allow'd sometimes to be my own master, and pass my time according to my own inclination, either by going my fishing parties on the Thames or by going to London to attend the Museum, R. Society, the Tuesday Club, and Auctions of pictures. I mean to have a light chariot or post chaise by the month, that I may make use of it in London and run backwards and forwards to Merton or to Shepperton, etc. This is my plan, and we might go on very well, but I am fully determined not to have more of the very silly altercations that happen but too often between us and embitter the present moments exceedingly. If realy one cannot live comfortably together, a *wise* and well *concerted separation* is preferable; but I think, considering the probability of my not troubling any party long in this world, the best for us all wou'd be to bear

those ills we have rather than flie to those we know not of. I have fairly stated what I have on my mind. There is no time for nonsense or trifling. I know and admire your talents and many excellent qualities, but I am not blind to your defects, and confess having many myself; therefore let us bear and forbear for God's sake."

A sensitive woman would have been arrested by the kindly moderation of this statement. But though "sensibility"—in the eighteenth-century use of the word—was one of Emma Hamilton's most marked characteristics, sensitiveness was not. It seems probable, from subsequent doings at Merton, that Sir William's protest was little heeded. Some idea of the mode of life there may be gathered from the account of a visit paid by Lord Minto about this time. "The whole establishment and way of life are such as to make me angry, as well as melancholy," he told his wife; "but I cannot alter it, and I do not think myself obliged, or at liberty, to quarrel with him for his weakness, though nothing shall ever induce me to give the smallest countenance to Lady Hamilton." He was convinced that Emma looked ultimately to surviving the two "impediments" (it is Nelson's own ruthless word) to her marriage with the admiral. Minto admitted that she was "in high looks, but more immense than ever. The love she makes to Nelson is not only

ridiculous, but disgusting: not only the rooms, but the whole house, staircase and all, are covered with nothing but pictures of her and him, of all sizes and sorts, and representations of his naval actions, coats-of-arms, pieces of plate in his honour, the flag-staff of *L'Orient*, etc.—an excess of vanity which counteracts its own purpose. If it was Lady Hamilton's house there might be a pretence for it; to make his own house a mere looking-glass to view himself all day is bad taste."

Lord Minto ignores, or is ignorant of, the fact that practically it was Lady Hamilton's own house. She had furnished and arranged it; she had made it speak Nelson on every wall. How much all this was Emma's doing and how little the admiral's may be gathered from an account of Nelson in private life, written by one of his nephews:—

"Lord Nelson in private life was remarkable for a demeanour quiet, sedate, and unobtrusive, anxious to give pleasure to every one about him, distinguishing each in turn by some act of kindness, and chiefly those who seemed to require it most. During his few intervals of leisure, in a little knot of relations and friends, he delighted in quiet conversation, through which occasionally ran an undercurrent of pleasantry, not unmixed with caustic wit. At his table he was least heard among the company, and so far from being the

hero of his own tale, I never heard him voluntarily refer to any of the great actions of his life."

But though the admiral might be silent, there was little chance of his actions being forgotten while Emma was present. She still shone as "Patroness of the Navy" to the younger officers of the Service. Lieutenant Parsons relates how she helped him to his Commission after the Peace of Amiens, when he found himself stranded on half-pay, with no chance of promotion. As a last resource he went to Merton. When he arrived there he found Nelson in an irritable humour, declaring that he was "pestered to death by young gentlemen, his former shipmates." This was disconcerting, but Tom Allen, Nelson's old sailor-servant, "went in search of an able auxiliary, who entered the study, in the most pleasing shape—that of a lovely and graceful woman; and, with her usual fascinating and playful manner, declared, 'His Lordship must serve me.' His countenance, which, until now, had been a thunder-cloud, brightened; and Lady Hamilton was the sun that lightened our hemisphere. She, with that ready wit possessed by the fair sex alone, set aside his scruples of asking a favour of the first Admiralty Lord, by dictating a strong certificate, which, under her direction, he wrote, 'Now, my young friend,' said her ladyship, with that irresistible smile which gave such expression of sweetness to her lovely countenance, 'obey my

directions minutely; send this to Lord St. Vincent, at Brentwood, so as to reach him on Sunday morning.' My commission as an officer was dated the same as the aforesaid certificate. May it be made up to thee in another and better world, sweet lady!" exclaims the grateful lieutenant, "for man's injustice in this—where thou hast been most foully calumniated—and thy sins and weaknesses attributed to their proper source: thy low birth and association of thy infant years, joined to the most extraordinary talent and beauty that ever adorned thy sex."

In the summer of this year the Hamiltons and Nelson and Charles Greville set out for a driving tour to Sir William's estates at Milford, which Greville had been managing for his uncle. Owing perhaps to seeing Milford Haven in company with Lady Hamilton, Nelson was struck with its suitability for a dockyard, and through his influence at the Admiralty one was established there on land belonging to the Hamiltons. Some years later the dockyard establishment was transferred to Pembroke. The tour turned out a triumphal progress for the admiral: in every town and hamlet he passed through, his countrymen came out to welcome and rejoice over him. There might be coldness and caution in high quarters, notably at Blenheim, which they visited, but the hearts of the people were warm. Emma herself partook in all the glory and all the plaudits;

and when she got back to Merton, exhausted with her exertions, but triumphant, she wrote exultantly, "We have had a most charming Tour which will Burst *some* of THEM." An explosive comment which is typical Emma!

The time was now drawing on when Emma's rightful protector was to leave her. Sir William's health had been slowly failing, and in the early spring of 1803 it was evident that he was very near his end. His wife and Nelson were constantly with him, caring for his last hours with a tenderness that would be strange in view of the facts, were human nature itself not capable of such strange complexities. Nelson had referred to Sir William as Emma's "uncle," and openly speculated upon his death. Emma had played the traitor to her husband and hidden the consequence without an apparent pang of compunction. Yet on the day he died she wrote, "Unhappy day for the forlorn Emma. Ten minutes past ten dear blessed Sir William left me." While Nelson said, "Our dear Sir William died at 10 minutes past Ten this morning in Lady Hamilton's and my arms without a sigh or a struggle. Poor Lady H. is as you may expect desolate."

In all the curious drama of Emma's life there is surely no episode so inexplicable as this of Sir William dying in the arms of his weeping and faithless wife, while Nelson soothed his last moments. Whether Sir William Hamilton

LADY HAMILTON AS A NUN

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suspected anything of the truth must remain a mystery. It seems impossible to believe that he, very much a man of the world and not ignorant of his wife's upbringing, should have been so blind to a situation at which many people were broadly hinting. Yet never by word or sign did he display the least doubt of either his friend or his wife, and in his will he left a miniature of Emma to Nelson: "The copy of Madame Le Brunn's picture of Emma in enamel by Bone, I give to my dearest friend Lord Nelson, Duke of Bronté, a very small token of the great regard I have for his lordship, the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character I ever met with. God bless him, and shame fall on all those who do not say Amen."

The conduct of all the three is best characterized by Mr. A. C. Swinburne's saying of Mary Stuart: "That there are fewer moral impossibilities than would readily be granted by the professional moralist, those students of human character who are not professional moralists may very readily admit."

Captain Hardy's comment on the affair was somewhat curt: "Sir William Hamilton died on Sunday afternoon, and was quite sensible to the last. How her Ladyship will manage to Live with the Hero of the Nile now, I am at a loss to know, at least in an honourable way."

Part of this problem was temporarily solved

by the outbreak of war with France, when Nelson was given the command of the Mediterranean, for "Buonaparte knows that if he hoists his flag it will not be in joke." Nelson's views on the renewal of the war are shown in the noble words he used in the House of Lords the previous winter. "I, my Lords, have in different countries, seen much of the miseries of war," said the great admiral; "I am, therefore, in my inmost soul, a man of peace. Yet I would not, for the sake of any peace, however fortunate, consent to sacrifice one jot of England's honour. Our honour is inseparably combined with our genuine interest. Hitherto there has been nothing greater known on the Continent than the faith, the untainted honour, the generous public sympathies, the high diplomatic influence, the commerce, the grandeur, the resistless power, the unconquerable valour of the British nation."

And to maintain these honours of his country, he left the English home which had grown so dear to him, and the woman who was more to him than anything on earth, and went to sea, hoisting his flag for the first time in the fatal and glorious *Victory*. He could not now fully practise what Codrington says he used to preach, "that every man became a bachelor after passing the Rock of Gibraltar"; for his heart was ever turning homewards to the England and the Emma, which in his thoughts had become

inextricably one. But in act he was as instant as though he had no horizon but the sea-rim, and no hope in life save to destroy the French. "That dear domestic happiness," as Codrington said, "never abstracted his attention." For two years he never set foot outside his ship, thus triumphantly proclaiming to Lady Hamilton and to the world his entire devotion to the two objects on which his heart was set—the woman he loved and the French fleet. If he met either, he declared, he would embrace them so closely that no power on earth should part them. "I have not a thought except on you and the French fleet," he told Emma; "all my thoughts, plans, and toils tend to those two objects. Don't laugh at my putting you and the French fleet together, but you cannot be separated."

But though these two different yet consuming passions were inseparable in his thoughts, the pursuit of the one severed him completely from the presence of the other. Emma Hamilton fretted and rebelled at the prolonged separation, though she had far more to distract her in her life on shore than had the lonely, harassed admiral at sea. But when she suggested coming out to him, Nelson was stern in refusal. The *Victory* was no place for her. "Imagine what a cruize off Toulon is; even in summer time we have a hard gale every week, and two days' heavy swell. It would kill you; and myself to see you.

Much less possible to have Charlotte, Horatia, etc., on board ship! And I, that have given orders to carry no women to sea in the *Victory*, to be the first to break them! I know, my own dear Emma, if she will let her reason have fair play, will say I am right; but she is like Horatia, very angry if she cannot have her own way." He appeals to the motives which were always so potent to him. "Your Nelson," he tells her, "is called upon, in the most honourable manner, to defend his country. Absence to us is equally painful: but, if I had either stayed at home, or neglected my duty abroad, would not my Emma have blushed for me? She could never have heard any praises, and how the country looks up."

But though separated from her by stern duty and leagues of ocean, his thoughts were continually with her. Each little happening at Merton was of a vital interest to him, and he kept regretting that the isolation of his sea-life prevented him from sending the gifts his generous temper prompted. "I go nowhere to get anything pretty; therefore do not think me neglectful." Emma was somewhat over-fond of gifts, and probably she was little pleased with Nelson's fine and jealous care when he told her that Mr. Scott, his secretary, had received from Venice "two very handsome Venetian chains," which would have been presented to her had he not

forbidden it. "I allow no one to make my own Emma presents, but her Nelson." Emma would certainly fail to appreciate this sentiment. But if all her life she lacked delicacy in accepting favours, she herself gave in return good measure, pressed down and running over. "Your purse, my dear Emma," Nelson told her on one occasion, "will always be empty; your heart is generous beyond your means." Beggars, children, and animals always clustered round her, with the instinctive recognition they have for the open-handed and open-hearted. And the beautiful, natural ardour which vivifies her early letters to Greville, and the excitable epistle she wrote Nelson after the Nile, was still hers in maturer years. On the first anniversary of the Battle of the Baltic she wrote to the hero—

"Immortal and great Nelson, what shall I say to you on this day? My heart and feeling are so overpowered that I cannot give vent to my full soul to tell you, as an Englishwoman gratefull to her country's saviour, what I feel towards you. And as a much loved friend that has the happiness of being beloved, esteemed, and admired by the good and virtuos Nelson, what must be my pride, my glory, to say this day, have I the happiness of being with him, one of his select, and how gratefull to God Almighty do I feel in having preserved you through such glorious dangers that never man before got through them with such

Honner and Success. Nelson, I want Eloquence to tell you what I feil, to avow the sentiments of respect and adoration with which you have inspired me. Admiration and delight you must ever raise in all who behold you, looking on you only as the guardian of England. But how far short are those sensations to what I as a much loved friend feil! And I confess to you the predominant sentiments of my heart will ever be, till it ceases to beat, the most unfeigned anxiety for your happiness, and the sincerest and most disinterested determination to promote your felicity, even at the hasard of my life. Excuse this scrawl, my dearest friend, but next to talking with you is writing to you. . . . God bless you, my ever dear Nelson. Long may you live to be the admiration of Europe, the delight of your country, and the idol of your constant, attached Emma."

And while Emma thus sang the praises of her hero, Nelson himself was not behindhand in the generous contest. In one of his letters he assures her, "In short, in every point of view, from Ambassatrice to the duties of domestic life, I never saw your equal! That Elegance of manners, accomplishments, and, above all, your goodness of heart, is unparalleled." He had told her, a year or two earlier, during Sir William Hamilton's lifetime, and alluding to the fact that Queen Charlotte never would receive her, "You

know that I would not, in Sir William's case, have gone to Court without my wife, and such a wife, never to be matched. It is true you would grace a Court better as a Queen than a visitor."

Thus she shone for him until the end. It is the only happy thing about the story. Disillusion would have broken his heart.

In the spring of 1804, while Nelson was at sea, his second child, again a girl, was born. The child only lived a short time—she came and disappeared again, a wandering baby ghost, leaving not even a birth or death certificate behind her.

Perhaps it was the loss of this child that made Nelson and Emma Hamilton feel it impossible to leave Horatia any longer in other hands. She must come under their own roof at Merton —the only difficulty was that she could not be openly acknowledged as their own daughter. A fresh fiction had to replace the "Thompson" one, to account for her presence. The "tangled web" of deceit had enmeshed even the feet of Nelson, and he wrote to Lady Hamilton, on the 13th of August, 1804, a letter, which was evidently intended for the public eye :—

"I am now going to state a thing to you and to request your kind assistance, which, from my dear Emma's goodness of heart, I am sure of her acquiescence in. Before we left Italy I told you

of the extraordinary circumstance of a child being left to my care and protection. On your first coming to England I presented you the child, dear Horatia. You became, to my comfort, attached to it, so did Sir William, thinking her the finest child he had ever seen. She is become of that age when it is necessary to remove her from a mere nurse and to think of educating her. . . . I am now anxious for the child's being placed under your protecting wing."

This was for the world to see; but on an enclosure was written for Emma alone, "My beloved, how I feel for your situation and that of our dear Horatia, our dear child,"

Once the little Horatia was established at Merton, Nelson at sea was full of the most anxious care and thought for her well-being. "Everything you tell me about my dear Horatia charms me," he writes to Lady Hamilton. "I think I see her, hear her, and admire her." He wishes he could be at Merton to assist in making the alterations that were being carried out. He speaks of the stream and the pond and their danger for the child, "Only take care that my darling does not fall in, and get drowned. I begged you to get the little netting along the edge, and, particularly, on the bridges." In another letter he writes, "I would not have Horatia think of a dog. I shall not bring her one; and, I am sure, she is better without a pet

of that sort. But she is like her mother, would get all the old dogs in the place about her." To Horatia herself he wrote, a few days later—

"My dear Horatia,—I send you twelve books of Spanish dresses, which you will let your guardian angel, Lady Hamilton, keep for you, when you are tired of looking at them. I am very glad to hear, that you are perfectly recovered; and, that you are a very good child. I beg, my dear Horatia, that you will always continue so; which will be a great comfort to your most affectionate Nelson and Bronte"

In writing to a child so young, Nelson could not express anything of his passionate feeling for her; but in a letter of this time to his niece, Charlotte Nelson, there is a little outburst, strangely out of keeping with his professed mild interest in the "orphan." "I feel truly sensible," he tells her, "of your kind regard for that dear little orphan, Horatia. Although her parents are lost, yet she is not without a fortune: and, I shall cherish her to the last moment of my life; and *curse* them who *curse* her, and Heaven *bless* them who *bless* her! Dear innocent! she can have injured no one."

And if his child Horatia meant all this to Nelson, Emma, the mother, meant more. There

was not an anniversary or an episode that did not remind his exiled heart of the one woman in whom his devotion centred. On his last birthday but one he wrote to her—

"This day, my dearest Emma, which gave me birth, I consider as more fortunate than common days; as by my coming into this world, it has brought me so intimately acquainted with you, who my soul holds most dear. I well know that you will keep it, and have my dear Horatia to drink my health. Forty-six years of toil and trouble! How few more, the common lot of mankind leads us to expect; and, therefore, it is almost time to think of spending the few last years in peace and quietness."

At home Emma celebrated the hero's birthday and the anniversaries of his victories with champagne and songs and all the gaiety, which she loved to the end of her days. To sit in solitude and remember the absent was not her way. To her, lights, plaudits, many faces were a necessity; the world was too much with her all her life, and the "still small voice" was drowned as completely in the crash of her falling fortunes as in the thunder and applause of her most brilliant days. She would laugh with the world so long as all went well, and when the world turned against her and deserted her she would still fight—with a certain violent courage. Neither love, nor grief, nor success, nor the bitter edge

LADY HAMILTON

BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN

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of poverty and debt and disgrace changed the essential Emma.

At this time, even while Nelson was living, her extravagance and lavish methods were plunging her more and more deeply into debt. Sir William Hamilton had failed to get the pension he expected from the Government, and his widow was still urging and protesting her rights and her needs. When she could not get what she wanted she adopted a somewhat thin attitude of noble magnanimity. To the Honourable George Rose, Nelson's friend, she wrote, in 1804—

"Lord Nelson has the greatest reliance on your friendship for him, which makes me take the liberty of now writing to you. I hope you will call on me when you come to town, and I promise you not to bore you with my own claims; for if those that have power will not do me justice, I must be quiet; and, in revenge to them, I can say,—if ever I am a minister's wife again, with the power I had then, why I will again do the same for my country as I did before; and I did more than any *ambassador* ever did, though their pockets were filled with secret-service money, and poor Sir William and myself never got even a pat on the back. But, indeed, the *cold-hearted* Grenville was in then. I know if I could tell my story to Mr. Pitt he would do me justice; but I never am to be so happy as to

be in company with that great man :—I call him the Nelson of Ministers. But I will not tire you with my *sad story*."

Emma had a real appreciation of greatness, and she always admired Pitt; but the Minister died so soon after Nelson that no guess can be made as to whether he would have done anything to satisfy her claims and to honour Nelson's last request to his country.

Nelson himself while living had no thought of making such a request. He still believed Emma capable of economy; he foresaw (or thought he did) a frugal and happy future—"we shall not want with prudence." In one letter he declares, "I have often said, and with honest pride, what I have is my own; it never cost the widow a tear, or the nation a farthing. I got what I have with my pure blood, from the enemies of my Country. Our house, my own Emma, is built upon a solid foundation; and will last to us."

Yet that was written within a month or two of the opening of the year of Trafalgar, the year which was to see Nelson's death and the ending of all his dreams of domestic happiness. The long waiting and watching in the Gulf of Lyons, the long separation from home and all that home meant to him, wore heavily upon his spirit. The call to action, as always, found him ready; but it was so long in coming. "This is an odd war," he said once in disgust, "not a battle!" But on

the 19th of January, 1805, the weary watching off Toulon was ended. Two of Nelson's look-out frigates came in sight in a heavy gale, bringing the news that the French fleet had at last put to sea. And so the final act in the great sea-drama began: the fate-fraught months moved steadily onwards to Trafalgar.

The situation, as it stood in the opening months of this momentous year, was a complicated and threatening one for England. Upon the French side of the Channel was encamped Napoleon's mighty army of invasion, looking with rapacious eyes across "the ruffled strip of salt," which was all that barred their progress to London; but that was an insurmountable barrier, as fate and Nelson were to prove. "I don't say the French can't come," said wise old St. Vincent; "I only say they can't come by sea!"

The French fleet was in three divisions—twenty ships at Brest, ten at Toulon, five at Rochefort. With these three squadrons, Napoleon's object was so to decoy and bewilder the British fleet that he might obtain that temporary command of the Channel which would make possible the invasion of England. By striking in three directions he hoped to confuse the real issue. The ships from Toulon and Rochefort were to proceed independently to the West Indies, rendezvous there and do what damage

they could, and return to Rochefort together. The Brest division was to land an army corps in Ireland, and then to cover the crossing of the troops waiting at Boulogne.

It must be remembered that Nelson had not the key to these Napoleonic schemes. We see the whole huge combination; he saw only a little bit of it—that the Toulon fleet which he had been watching had at last put to sea. Amid all the maze of possible French motives and very evident English dangers, Nelson had one thread to guide him: his lifelong determination, on all occasions and wherever possible, to find and destroy the French fleet. The old fire came down on him and the old anguish of anxiety. "I am in a fever," he wrote; "God send I may find them!" He went to Egypt after them, and returned disconsolate, to find that the French had put back into Toulon, much battered by the storms and the encounter with the open sea after so many months in harbour. "Buonaparte," wrote Nelson later, "has often made his brags that our Fleet would be worn out by keeping the sea,—that his was kept in order, and increasing by staying in Port; but he now finds, I fancy, if *Emperors* hear truth, that his Fleet suffers more in one night than ours in one year."

Buonaparte's first combinations had broken up in some disarray; his squadrons had made useless outings and failed to meet, while the British were

still masters of the sea-situation. But a second effort soon followed. The Toulon fleet broke out again, and made for the West Indies, and once more Nelson followed. His long, close chase to the West Indies and back again was unsuccessful in its object of catching the French fleet; but Villeneuve, with Nelson so close on his track, could do nothing save fly. Jamaica was saved, the sugar ships were saved, and, driven irresistibly by the terrible British admiral, the French fled back to Europe, where, owing to the warning sent by Nelson, they were met off Cape Finisterre by Sir Robert Calder. After a partial fleet action, Villeneuve put into Vigo, and a month later retreated to Cadiz. So Napoleon's sea-plans were upset; Nelson's vigilance had defeated them, and he was free to turn his face homewards—for the last time.

He reached Merton on the 19th of August, to find all his agitated and happy family assembled to receive him. But warm as was Nelson's affection for his brother and sisters and their children, it was Emma and the little dark-eyed Horatia clinging to her skirts, who made the centre and the radiance of his home. Each day as it fled was precious and too short. He was happy and more at peace than he had been for years in his own mind; but over all hung the foreboding that his work was not yet finished, that this respite was only snatched before the storm of

war once more broke around his head. After a short week or two the summons came: England needed Nelson for the last and final effort, and without a thought of self he gave up all he held most dear and went forth to fight his last battle.

Emma Hamilton was a brave woman, as is sufficiently proved by her past actions, but she did both herself and Nelson a wrong when she later claimed that it was she who spurred the hero to his final sacrifice. Harrison's version of the story (written under her influence) is well known; she tells it again in a letter to Nelson's chaplain, Dr. Scott, written nearly a year after the admiral's death. "Did I ever keep him at home?" she asks. "Did I not share in his glory? *Even this last fatal victory, it was I bid him go forth.* Did he not pat me on the back, call me brave Emma, and said, 'If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons'?" Instead of her having to urge him to his duty, impartial study of Nelson's correspondence reveals that it was he who was constantly setting a high ideal of devotion to England before Emma. Two years earlier he had written to her—

"The call of our country, is a duty which you would, deservedly, in the cool moments of reflection, reprobate, was I to abandon: and I should feel so disgraced, by seeing you ashamed of me! No longer saying—'This is the man who has saved his country! This is he who is the first

to go forth to fight our battles, and the last to return!' And, then, all these honours reflect on you. . . . My heart is with you, cherish it. I shall, my best beloved, return—if it pleases God—a victor; and it shall be my study to transmit an unsullied name."

There speaks a man who needed no woman's word to spur him to his duty! Though written in August, 1803, it almost exactly expressed Nelson's feeling in September, 1805. The only difference was a deeper tone, a sense of solemnity and fate shadowing his hopes. After saying his last farewell to Emma and Horatia—he spent his parting moments praying over the cot of his little sleeping daughter—he wrote in his letter-book on September the 13th—

"Friday night, at half-past ten, drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all that I hold dear in this world, to go and serve my King and country. May the great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my country, and if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the throne of His mercy. If it is His good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission, relying that He will protect those so dear to me that I leave behind. His will be done. Amen. Amen. Amen."

Before he finally left the shores of England

and set sail for Trafalgar—then "a name by fame unchronicled"—he was followed by tearful notes from Emma; and wrote her encouragement and hope even while the shadow of parting lay heavy on his heart. Some of Emma's later letters he never lived to read; her last little stories of Horatia fell unheeded into the void where he had gone.

"You will be even fonder of her when you return," wrote Emma, on the 8th of October. "She says, 'I love my dear, dear Godpapa, but Mrs. Gibson told me he killed all the people, and I was afraid.' Dearest angel she is! Oh! Nelson, how I love her, but how do I idolise you,—the dearest husband of my heart, you are all in this world to your Emma. May God send you victory, and home to your *Emma, Horatia, and paradise Merton*, for when you are there, it will be paradise. My own Nelson, may God preserve you."

There is a cry of foreboding fear in those words. But Nelson knew neither fear nor foreboding when the great occasion of his life faced him at last. He had a growing conviction, as the time drew on, that he would not live through the battle, but he had also a spirit "fraught with fire unquenchable." The momentous hours must be shared by Emma, so to her he wrote—

"My dearest beloved Emma, the dear friend of my bosom, the signal has been made that the

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Enemy's Combined Fleet are coming out of Port. We have very little wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before to-morrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success; at all events, I take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life. And as my last writing before the Battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the Battle."

This letter was found open on Nelson's desk after he had fallen. His last thoughts before he went into action were of Lady Hamilton: he wrote the famous Codicil to his Will, in which he so confidently commended her to the care of his King and country, and as her portrait was moved from his cabin in the general clearance before a ship goes into action, he cried, "Take care of my Guardian Angel!"

The great incidents of that battle off Cape Trafalgar are engraved imperishably in the hearts of the English people. When the fatal bullet from the *Redoutable's* top had done its work, when Nelson lay dying in the *Victory's* dark cockpit, in death as in life he had but two thoughts—the two that were one in his heart, Emma and England. In the last hours of mortal anguish he spoke constantly of the woman he had so devotedly loved. "Pray let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other

things belonging to me," was his first request after he had satisfied his anxiety as to the fortunes of the fight. When the surgeon told him that unhappily for his country his injuries were past aid, Nelson said, "I know it. I feel something rising in my breast which tells me I am gone." After a few minutes he murmured, "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton, if she knew of my situation?" When Hardy visited him for the second time, Nelson begged him to "take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy. Take care of poor Lady Hamilton." In a low but emphatic voice, he said to Dr. Scott, his chaplain, "Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner;" and after a pause, "*Remember*, that I leave Lady Hamilton and my Daughter Horatia as a legacy to my Country; never forget Horatia." Then as speech grew more difficult, his last words expressed the ideal which had guided him all his life, which had inspired his final signal: "Thank God, I have done my duty."

So died Nelson. And Emma in England, writing to him on the 24th of October—all unknowing that he was already dead and immortal, gone far beyond her tears—had called him, in a touching and tender little phrase, her "all of good."

CHAPTER XV

AFTER TRAFALGAR

AFTER Trafalgar the sun had set, the glory had gone out of Emma Hamilton's life. Her uncertain position was no longer buttressed by the magic of Nelson's name, the might of his personality. But she had lost so much more than mere material advantage and protection: she had lost the heart that trusted and believed in her, that held her without flaw. In a truer and deeper sense than she herself half understood when she wrote it, Nelson was her "all of good." His faith in her had been the spur to her nobler nature, had enabled her to reach after qualities that were not innate. This aspect of her loss she probably never realized; when the blow fell, it was the bitter personal side that wounded her, the sense that Nelson himself would return no more. But she was an easy creature even in her grief, which, though passionate enough, had something of the facile quality of a child's outcries, and also something of a child's subconsciousness that she was making herself interesting and conspicuous. She took to her bed, and

passed her days in reading over Nelson's letters, which she declared were "sacred, and shall remain so," and weeping over the past. But her prostration did not prevent her from seeing people, and she was anxious that her sufferings should be realized. Mrs. Cadogan, Emma's mother, wrote to George Rose, telling him that Nelson's sister and her family "at this moment surround her ladyship's bed, bewailing their sad loss and miserable state." Emma's own condition, according to her affectionate mother, "is beyond description." The silent grief which eats inwards, so that—

> "She nothing heeds
> And nothing needs—
> Only remembers,"

was totally alien to Emma's expansive nature.

She wrote herself to George Rose at the end of November from Clarges Street, "I write from my bed, where I have been ever since the fatal sixth of this month, and only rose to be removed from Merton here." She tells him, "My dear Sir, my heart is broken. Life to me now is not worth having; I lived but for him. His glory I gloried in; it was my pride that he should go forth; and this fatal and last time he went I persuaded him to it. But I cannot go on;—my heart and head are gone; . . . My mind is not a common one; and having lived as a *confidante* and friend with such men as Sir William

Hamilton, and dearest, glorious Nelson, I feel myself superior to vain tattling woman."

In this same letter there are signs that she had already got a little across with the Reverend William Nelson, the admiral's place-hunting brother, who had been made an earl in honour of the name of the great dead seaman. She calls him "leaky" in regard to confidences. She says, "The *Earl you know;* but a man must have great courage to *accept* the honour of—calling himself by *that* name."

England conferred honours upon Nelson's brother; but the woman whom he had loved, and left expressly to the care and the generosity of his country, was ignored. There is little need to go into all the familiar details. Pitt might have done something, but then Pitt died within a week or two of the day on which Nelson was laid to his last glorious rest under the dome of St. Paul's. Before the great State funeral Nelson's chaplain, Dr. Scott, kept devoted watch over the dead hero at Greenwich. From there he wrote to Lady Hamilton, speaking from the depth of his own grief to hers, "Every thought and word I have is about your dear Nelson. Here lies Bayard, but Bayard victorious. . . . So help me God, I think he was a true knight and worthy the age of chivalry."

When Nelson was buried, and Pitt, "the Nelson of Ministers," was dead, Emma Hamilton

was left to fight her case against the apathy and self-righteousness of officialdom as best she might. The case did not rest on her merits, but on Nelson's dying wish and pathetic confidence that his country would grant his last request. But that was something which the powers of the day entirely failed to realize. It is true that efforts were made on her behalf, particularly by the Honourable George Rose, who, as his biographer says, "considered that every one belonging to Lord Nelson was a legacy to himself;" though it is plain from the tone of his letters to her that Lady Hamilton did not please him personally. But he drew up petitions for her to present to successive Ministers, and took considerable trouble, all without avail. Her claims to a pension because of her services in the Mediterranean were not sufficiently authentic in the eyes of the Government, and, moreover, as Rose said to her in the midsummer of 1806, "the difficulty in affording you relief is increased to a great extent by the length of time that has elapsed since your claim arose, in which period there have been three administrations." He based some hope, however, on the codicil to Nelson's Will. But a year later he was writing to her—

"The reward recommended by Lord Nelson for yourself, on the score of public services, seems to be now quite desperate. The only hope I can venture to hold out the remotest prospect

of to you is, that Mr. Canning may possibly on some favourable opportunity propose to the Duke of Portland to recommend to the King a small pension to the child."

Thus Emma Hamilton's hopes dwindled, as Ministers grew more cautious and more cold, and the "favourable opportunity" receded yet further into the grey distance of things undone. But if there was caution in official quarters, there was also some justification for it. Lady Hamilton's case was undoubtedly a difficult one to deal with; her connection with Nelson was not one that could be publicly and officially acknowledged; her services to the country rested more on her own and the dead hero's assurances than on any papers which could be tabulated and pigeonholed in a satisfactory official manner: altogether, a thorny and awkward matter.

But if the behaviour of British Ministers was indifferent, that of Earl Nelson was cruel and contemptible. When his great brother was living, when Emma was the dispenser of patronage and the fount of power, he fawned upon her. Though a clergyman, he chose to shut his eyes to the manner of her life; he let her bring up his daughter Charlotte, and be the intimate friend of his wife; he accepted everything she had to offer, and was not above asking for more. He flattered her fulsomely, and when he wished to get anything from his generous and unsuspicious sailor

brother, would choose Lady Hamilton as his envoy. "I leave it to your Ladyship (my best and truest friend)," he wrote to her in 1801 'to say everything to him, for and from me: it will come best from your lips, and adorned with your eloquence."

Yet when Nelson was dead, and the title and the power and the money—far more than had ever belonged to his heroic brother—had fallen to his share, Emma Hamilton received nothing save fair words and promises from him, and later not even those. He kept the codicil to Nelson's Will out of her possession till his own prospects were fully assured, and then, Emma says, he tossed it back to her "with a very coarse expression," telling her to do what she liked with it.

Many years later, when poor and exiled at Calais, she wrote bitterly of the conduct of Nelson's brother: "Earl and Countess Nelson lived with me seven years. I educated Lady Charlotte and paid at Eton for Trafalgar. . . . They have never given the dear Horatia a frock or a sixpence."

On the other hand, Nelson's sisters, Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Matcham, were faithful in their attachment to Lady Hamilton, though owing to her pecuniary embarrassments and the various shifts to which she was driven, they necessarily saw less of her in later years. At first, however, after Nelson's death, things went on very much

the same as before at Merton and in London. Before Trafalgar debt had already begun to cast its dark shadow over Emma's horizon of ample worldly prosperity. Nelson had left Merton to her and an annuity of £500 from his Bronte estates, as well as the interest from the £4000 settled upon Horatia, and a gift of £2000 to herself. Besides this she had £700 or £800 a year left her by Sir William Hamilton, and his legacy of £800. But Emma, who used to keep accounts so carefully, even down to the halfpenny given to a "poor man," had long lost the habit of economy. She was involved in a large way of living, and the restraint and effort needed in order to pull up had become not only most distasteful to her, but almost impossible. Her moral fibre was permanently slackened, her inspiration and her youth were alike gone, she could never again be strung up to the old brave pitch. She still remained excitable and emotional as ever; the grief for Nelson, which she described as "sacred," must, nevertheless, be indulged full in the public eye. Professor Knox Laughton says that night after night she attended the theatre to hear Braham sing the "Death of Nelson;" weeping at the recitative—

> "O'er Nelson's tomb, with silent grief opprest,
> Britannia mourns her hero now at rest;
> But those bright laurels will not fade with years,
> Whose leaves are watered by a nation's tears,"

and fainting at the concluding verse. It cannot be denied that Lady Hamilton was capable of doing such a thing, though it shocks every idea of dignity and reticence, and savours of the tricks of the stage; but it must also be remembered that such actions on her part were not necessarily insincere, though they are obviously shallow.

To the end of her life Emma went under the delusion that her fate and her fortunes were a national affair. Perhaps the most amazing of all her many claims was her expressed wish to be buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. "If I can be buried in St. Paul's, I should be very happy to be near the glorious Nelson, whom I loved and admired," she said, with a paralyzing unconsciousness as to the outrageous nature of her request.

The whole history of her last years is a series of petitions and memorials, none of which were ever heeded, though they were less wild than her request for burial in St. Paul's. The parts of her Prince Regent Memorial referring to her actions before the Battle of the Nile have been quoted in an earlier chapter. But in 1809, under the guidance of Mr. Rose, she stated her claims in a reasonable and unexaggerated manner. "My case is plain and simple," she said; "I rendered a service of the utmost importance to my country, attested in the clearest and most undeniable manner possible; and I have received

no reward, although justice was claimed for me by the hero who lost his life in the performance of his duty to that country, in one of the most brilliant victories that was ever accomplished, after a series of former services unexampled almost in the history of the world. If I had bargained for a reward beforehand, there can be no doubt but that it would have been given to me, and *liberally;* I hoped then not to want it. I do now stand in *the utmost need of it,* and surely it will not now be refused to me. I accompany this paper with a copy of what Lord Nelson wrote in the solemn moments which preceded the action in which he fell; and I am still not without a hope that the dying, earnest, entreaty of such a man, in favour of a child he had adopted and was devotedly fond of, will be complied with, as well as my own application." She concluded this memorial by expressing her faith in "the justness and perfect fairness" of any Government department to which her claims might be referred, but added, "If to the Naval one, where they can be well judged of, I should hope for due attention."

Emma Hamilton always believed in the Navy, and always liked seamen. To Earl St. Vincent she wrote—

"My dear Lord,—A strong sense of the deep regard which you have ever shewn, for all that relates to the welfare of our country in general,

and consequently to its naval glory in particular; with the tender recollection, how dear you thus rendered yourself to the heart of our immortal and incomparable hero, whose ardent wish it was to see your Lordship always at the head of the Admiralty, a sentiment that still pervades the bravest bosoms in the navy; have awakened in my heart a hope after so many years of anxiety and cruel disappointment, that the public services of importance, which it was my pride as well as duty to perform, while the wife of his Majesty's Minister at the Court of Naples, may, possibly, through your Lordship's friendly and generous advice, and most able and active assistance, which I now most earnestly solicit, but a short time longer remains either unacknowledged, or unrewarded, by my King and country. . . . I will not arouse the just indignation of your Lordship's great and honourable mind, by reciting the many petty artifices, mean machinations, and basely deceptive tenders of friendship, which hitherto have prevented Lord Nelson's dying request from being duly heard, by those to whom it is so peculiarly and pathetically addressed."

Poor Emma might well feel herself alone in the world so far as real friends went—hangers-on she always had about her so long as she possessed a penny. But of her real friends and the old circle that had so pleased her, some were dead, some had gone away, and some were disgusted

by her incurable extravagance and foolish passion for exaggeration. By this very Memorial to which she refers in her letter, she lost the support —rather a chilly support, but still influential and valuable to her—of Rose and Canning, owing to some unjustifiable statements she made about their promises to Nelson in regard to her future. Emma never could learn to tell the strict truth—it was almost always too plain and unadorned for her flamboyant taste. And before judging her very obvious failings in this respect and in others too harshly, it is well to remember the deep truth and deeper charity of the mad Ophelia's saying, "Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be."

Some years before the production of this Prince Regent Memorial of 1813, Lady Hamilton had come to financial grief. Merton Place, which she loved for its many associations and for all the improvements that she and Nelson had planned together, and she had carried out with a reckless disregard of cost, had to be sold, and her affairs were taken in hand by some excellent men who desired to aid her and disentangle her from the wretched state in which she was then living. They formed themselves into a committee, did the best they possibly could with her assets, and cleared her of debt. Emma, of course, was vehemently grateful: "Goldsmid and my city friends came forward, and they have rescued me

from Destruction, Destruction brought on by *Earl Nelson's* having thrown on me the Bills for finishing Merton, by his having secreted the Codicil of Dying Nelson, who attested in his dying moments that I had well served my country. All these things and papers . . . I have laid before my Trustees. They are paying my debts. I live in retirement, and the City are going to bring forward my claims."

Thus Emma was pulled out of the Slough of Despond—for a time. But "living in retirement" was against the grain with her; whatever resolutions she may have taken she certainly managed to see plenty of society at Richmond, where she was residing at this time. The fear of debt could not check her passion for amusement. It may be that she clung so tenaciously to the light and stir of her little world because she felt how blank was the future, how dark the outer circle beyond the rays of the fire and the candlelight. Perhaps she did not dare to sit down and "look before and after and pine for what is not." It is no wonder if there are indications of melancholy in her letters; the outer props of her life were crumbling so visibly.

At the beginning of 1810, Fate dealt her a shrewd blow—her mother died. Mrs. Cadogan had been the greatest support and comfort to Emma, and in all the vicissitudes of her career there is no sign of anything but the most perfect

accord and mutual devotion between them. Emma was completely overcome by her loss, and more than a year afterwards wrote, "I have lost the best of mothers, my wounded heart, my comfort, all buried with Her. I can not now feel any pleasure but that of thinking and speaking of her."

There was now only Horatia left, and with Nelson's daughter Emma Hamilton wandered to different places in London—from Bond Street to Albemarle Street, from thence to Piccadilly once more, and then to Dover Street. She might frequent the old haunts, but the old faces were gone, and she again involved herself in debt, for she still kept open house and presented some appearance of prosperity to the people who hung on to her reckless bounty. Then quite suddenly the crash came: she was arrested for debt, and only saved herself from prison by residing with poor Horatia within the rules of the King's Bench. This disaster did not continue very long; she still had faithful friends, who came to her aid and stood bail, while the Boltons and the Matchams, instead of turning from her, evidently regarded her as a shamefully ill-treated woman. With that marvellous power of recovery with which she had been endowed by nature, and an equally marvellous power of procuring funds or living on credit, Emma established herself again in Bond Street after this episode. But her

resuscitation was short; in July, 1813, she was arrested for debt a second time, and had to return with Horatia to the narrow lodgings in Temple Place. Her confinement was not rigorous; she could see her friends, and was allowed, for her health's sake, to drive out. But she was really ill, and her indomitable spirit was at last beginning to break under her accumulated troubles. The state of mind to which she was driven is shown by the way in which she attacked the innocent little girl, Horatia, to whom she was really devoted, and who was certainly more deserving of pity even than her unfortunate mother. On Easter Sunday of this year she wrote an extraordinary accusatory letter to her young daughter.

"Ah! Horatia," she cries, "if you had grown up as I wished you, what a joy, what a comfort might you have been to me! For I have been constant to you, and willingly pleas'd for every manifestation you shew'd to learn and profitt of my lessons. . . . I have weathered many a storm for your sake, but these frequent blows have kill'd me. Listen then from a mother, who speaks from the dead. Reform your conduct, or you will be detested by all the world, and when you shall no longer have my fostering arm to sheild you, woe betide you, you will sink to nothing." There is more in this strain, and she goes on, "I weep, and pray you may not be totally

lost; my fervent prayers are offered up to God for you. I hope you may become yet sensible of your eternal welfare. I shall go to join your father and my blessed mother, and may you on your deathbed have as little to reproach yourself as your once affectionate mother has."

There is something distinctly unbalanced in these reproaches to a child of twelve, and Emma was bewailing herself again in six months' time. "If my poor mother was living to take my part," she tells her young daughter, "broken as I am with greif and ill-health, I should be happy to breathe my last in her arms. I thank you for what you have done to-day. You have helped me nearer to God, and may God forgive you."

Poor Horatia! Poor Emma!

While she was still confined within the rules of King's Bench—her kind "City friend," Alderman Smith, eventually came to the rescue and bailed her out—a further trouble fell upon her. Some years earlier Nelson's letters to her had been stolen by some unfaithful servant or dependant, and in 1814, to her public discomfiture and private grief, they were published. Her last rag of reputation was torn from her, and the revelation of the Prince of Wales' episode, which so agitated Nelson in 1801, destroyed her last chance of royal help. It is needless to inquire what were the comments of the scandal-mongers of the day. But as the criticism of Mrs. St.

George—who had known both Nelson and the Hamiltons at Dresden—is at once just and true, it is worth transcribing. Of Nelson's letters she said—

"Though disgraceful to his principles of morality on one subject, they do not appear to me, as they do to most others, degrading to his understanding. They are pretty much what every man, deeply entangled, will express, when he supposes but one pair of fine eyes will read his letters; and his sentiments on subjects unconnected with his fatal attachment are elevated—looking to his hearth and his home for future happiness; liberal, charitable, candid, affectionate, indifferent to the common objects of pursuit, and clear-sighted in his general views of politics and life."

Before the publication of the "Nelson Letters," and while still residing within the rules of King's Bench Prison, Emma celebrated, for the last time on English soil, the anniversary of the Battle of the Nile. In inviting one or two of her remaining friends, she wrote—

"It is the first of August, do come, it is a day to me glorious, for I largely contributed to its success" [a characteristic Emma exaggeration!] "and at the same time it gives me pain and grief, thinking on the Dear lamented Chief, who so bravely won the day, and if you come we will drink to his immortal memory. He cou'd never

have thought that his Child and my self shou'd pass the anniversary of that victorious day were we shall pass it, but I shall be with a few sincere and valuable friends, all Hearts of Gold, not Pincheback."

It must have been a sorry celebration of a glorious anniversary—the shabby room, the harassed, debt-ridden woman, whose beauty had coarsened and whose fortunes had sunk to zero, yet who still raised her glass, defiant on the very edge of calamity, to the memory of the dead hero.

By the summer of the following year, Alderman Smith and other of her "City friends" had obtained her discharge and collected a sum of money for her immediate needs. She was free once more, and most of her creditors were paid; but some few were still unsatisfied, and were about to issue fresh writs against her. So with the assistance and advice of Alderman Smith and one or two others, she prepared to fly from England to Calais. She was most anxious that those who had helped her should not be injured by her flight. As she told George Rose, "I then begged Mr. Smith to withdraw his bail, for I wou'd have died in prison sooner than that good man should have suffered for me."

At the end of June, 1814, she and Horatia embarked at the Tower, and, sailing down the Thames, Emma Hamilton looked her last upon

the country where she was born—the country for which Nelson had lived and died. There is reason to imagine from her letters that her own susceptibilities were somewhat blunted; that her emotions, which in earlier years had been expended upon large affairs, were now limited to her own and Horatia's fortunes and comforts. The sadness of her exile from her native land seemed counterbalanced by the fact that in France people were kind, that turkeys and partridges were cheap, and Bordeaux wine fifteenpence a bottle. Perhaps after all her unhappy experiences since Trafalgar she did not feel exile from England so bitter—she may have felt that England had treated her but ill. All her life she cherished loyalties for persons, not causes. It was Nelson she loved, not England. England was included during his lifetime because the two could not be separated, because it pleased her to play the patriot before his admiring eyes. But England without Nelson she found cold—the abstract passion of country was not in her. As the fires of life sank down, she, like many another, ceased to care for "lost causes and impossible loyalties," but craved a little comfort to end her storm-tossed days.

This at first she found in France, living for a time at Dessein's hotel, with her usual disregard of cost. Then she moved to another and cheaper hostelry, and from there to a comfort-

able farmhouse kept by two French ladies. She seems for a time to have been fairly contented, unhaunted by the thought of what she once called her "former splendours." Writing to George Rose at this time, she tells him—

"Everybody is pleased with Horatia. The General and his good old wife are very good to us; but our little world of happiness is ourselves. If, my dear Sir, Lord Sidmouth would do something for dear Horatia, so that I can be enabled to give her an education, and also for her dress, it would ease me, and make me very happy. Surely he owes this to Nelson."

To what a small petition was Emma Hamilton reduced after all her large Memorials! Her chief anxiety was now for Horatia. Within a few months of her death she wrote to Sir William Scott, "If my dear Horatia was provided for I should dye happy, and if I could only now be enabled to make her more comfortable and finish her Education, ah, God, how I would bless them that enabled me to do it!" She vows she has "seen enough of grandeur not to regret it," but she is distressed at the straitness of her means. She had asked Earl Nelson to let her have her Bronte pension quarterly instead of half yearly, but he had refused, "saying he was too poor." "Think what I must feel," she cries, "who was used to give God only knows, and now to ask!"

The farmhouse became too expensive for her meagre purse, and she had to betake herself and Horatia to humble lodgings in Calais, in the Rue Française. The winter was upon them, and though the stories told of Emma and her daughter being upon the verge of starvation in these last months are not true, yet they lacked all save the bare necessaries of life—these two stranded creatures, one of whom was the only child of Lord Nelson, and the other who had been Romney's "divine lady" and the pride of the Neapolitan Court.

"My Broken Heart does not leave me," Emma had written a little while before, and her health was now finally broken also. In the course of her life she had met and escaped from disgrace and danger and debt; but death she could not elude, and she had no further spirit left to try. The winter was severe, she caught a chill that settled on her chest; she was short of comforts, and her courage was exhausted. Worry and protracted disappointment had broken her down. By mid-January of 1815 the end came: she died shrived and consoled by a priest of the Roman Church—long before, while at Naples, she had professed the Catholic faith. In one of her recently discovered letters to Sir Harris Nicolas, Horatia gives a distressing account of the closing scene: the somewhat unsympathetic detachment of her tone is due to

the fact that she never believed Lady Hamilton was her mother:—

"At the time of her death she was in great distress, and had I not, unknown to her, written to Lord Nelson to ask the loan of £10, and to another kind friend of hers who immediately sent her £20, she would not literally have had one shilling till her next allowance became due. Latterly, she was hardly sensible. I imagine that her illness originally began by being bled, whilst labouring under an attack of jaundice, whilst she lived at Richmond. From that time she never was well, and added to this the baneful habit she had of taking spirits and wine to a fearful degree, brought on water on the chest. She died in January, 1815, and was buried in the burying-ground attached to the town. That was a sad, miserable time to me. Latterly her mind became so irritable by drinking, that I had written to Mr. Matcham, and he had desired that I would lose no time in getting some respectable person to take me over, and that I was to come to them, where I should always find a home. After her death, as soon as he heard of it, he came to Dover to fetch me. With all Lady Hamilton's faults, and she had *many*, she had many fine qualities."

All the best of Emma Hamilton's life had really died ten years before at Trafalgar, and in the year of Waterloo the flame which had burnt

high and brilliantly was extinguished. The span of her life covered the great era of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars; she had lived through them all, from the "Glorious First of June" to the Nile, the Baltic, and Trafalgar; from Ulm and Austerlitz to Talavera and Vittoria; Borodino and Napoleon's retreat from Moscow came within the scope of her lifetime, as did the American War of 1812; and she died only six months before Waterloo was fought. Amid many of these high events, in that scene of the world's activities, the Mediterranean, Emma Hamilton had played her part and played it well — with courage, with resource, with infinite ardour. She began life as an outcast, and she ended it as one; but between her troubled youth and her desolate death she had crowded a breathless age of living —she had known power and used it; she had lived in hundreds of eyes as the beauty of her time; and she had been the single passion of Nelson's life. Her career is full of dazzling events, just as her character, in spite of many and most glaring faults, is rich, and human, and lovable. But "the years that bring the philosophic mind" never came to Emma; instead, her years were full of restless excitements and ambitions. To the end the lessons of life were unlearned; she had a heart defiant but not strong, and a temper impatient to the last of all

but prosperity. She was not made of that finer mettle which is tempered in the fire of affliction. In the final event it is neither beauty, nor power, nor fame that counts, but the spirit—and that only. There was something prophetic in the words she wrote in a shaken hand on the back of Nelson's last letter to her—the letter which was found open on his desk after Trafalgar was fought and the hero was dead—"Oh, miserable, wretched Emma! Oh, glorious and happy Nelson!"

It might well stand for the epitaph of them both—and Emma Hamilton has no other, for the very place of her grave in the Calais cemetery is obliterated. There is a sad and curious irony in the fact that she who was Nelson's last charge and legacy to the English people—Nelson, whose whole life was given to fighting the French, and who died by a French bullet—should lie buried in a "little, little grave, an obscure grave," in France.

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